

**Exploring the social context of sex and HIV/STI risk of recently released black men in
Baltimore City.**

By

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Abstract

Background: Black males comprise the largest group of US adults currently incarcerated, accounting for more than 30% of all males behind bars with rates nearly 6 times greater than those of white males. With evidence suggesting that incarceration contributes to black men's disproportionately high risk of HIV and other STIs this issue has great public health relevance. Prior research indicates that recently released men, or those leaving prison or jail within the previous 12 months, engage in high-risk sexual behavior after being released from correctional facilities. However, there is a dearth of research exploring social contextual factors that may be relevant to these behaviors and contribute to subsequent HIV/STI risk. This research explores factors which motivate recently released black men to engage in high risk sexual behaviors, the ways in which they secure opportunities for sex, and how having a recent incarceration history impacts their perceived ability to secure those opportunities.

Aims: The objective of this research is addressed in three manuscripts with the following aims (1) Explore ways in which recently released men obtain sex during the immediate post-release period (2) Explore the factors that influence recently released men's condom use in sex during the immediate post-release period (3) Examine the ways in which exposure to incarceration impacts the dynamics of sexual partnering between recently released men and their sex partners during the immediate post-release period (4) Describe what influences recently released men to engage in sex during the immediate post-release period and (5) Discuss how those influences might be shaped by gender norms.

Methods: In-depth interviews were conducted with 19 recently released black men recruited from Baltimore City community-based organizations that provide services for this population, and from former study participants of HIV prevention studies at a community-based HIV prevention research center. Interviews were structured broadly around life during incarceration and after release, with specific focus on sexual behavior and masculinity. 19 black men, mean age

33, were enrolled in the present study. All participants were interviewed at least once, and three participants completed follow-up interviews.

All interviews were transcribed either by a professional transcription service or the student investigator. A coding scheme was developed using a priori codes drawn from interview guide domains and supporting literature and emergent themes from the data. Data were analyzed using an inductive and deductive approaches informed by the Constant Comparative Method. External auditing and peer debriefing were used to ensure data credibility and dependability.

Main Findings & Significance: Together the three manuscripts comprising this research examine the social context of sexual risk behaviors of recently released black men. Findings of this study suggest that there are sexual norms and practices specific to the immediate post-release period that promote HIV/STI risk behaviors through several mechanisms. These sexual norms and practices are shaped by participant's recently released status and contextually defined gender norms and are perpetuated, both directly and indirectly, by members of participants' peer groups. This work provides insight into the mechanisms behind sexual risk behaviors of recently released black men and contextualizes HIV/STI risk among a subset of men under the supervision of the criminal justice system who are at increased risk for HIV and other sexually transmitted infections.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Each year, thousands of black men are released from jails and prisons (E. Carson, 2015). The time period in which these men are reintegrating into their communities, after being released from correctional facilities, poses considerable risk for engaging in HIV/STI risk behaviors. For example, evidence suggests that men with recent histories of incarceration are more likely to engage in high-risk sexual activity (Epperson, El-Bassel, Chang, & Gilbert, 2010; Khan, Wohl, et al., 2008; Khan et al., 2009; Morrow, Eldridge, Nealey-Moore, & Grinstead, 2007). This contributes to their risk for HIV/STIs. To date, most research in this area has focused on identifying individual factors associated with these behaviors (e.g. sex, age, drug use history, etc.). Few studies have explored the role of social contextual factors in high-risk sexual behavior and social processes that may help explain their occurrence. Research exploring ways in which incarceration and reintegration into society affects HIV/STI risk is necessary to reduce risk for black men released from prisons and jails within the past 12 months, henceforth referred to as recently released black men.

This research investigates the mechanisms behind sexual risk behaviors of recently released men and contextualizes HIV/STI risk among a subset of men under the supervision of the criminal justice system who are at increased risk for HIV and other sexually transmitted infections.

Chapter 2 provides background information on racial disparities in rates of incarceration in the US, while discussing associated health implications, and the rationale for this work. In addition, chapter 2 presents an in-depth review of related literature on reentry and sexual health, outlines the current literature on sexual risk behaviors of recently released men, and identifies areas of needed research. Chapter 3 discusses the theoretical perspectives of this work, which includes a socio ecological perspective on HIV/STI risk behaviors among black populations, and masculine gender theory as it relates to black men, sexuality, and sexual risk behaviors. Masculine gender theory has informed this body of work, and is integrated into the three studies as an important

social contextual element impacting sexual risk behavior. Chapter 4 details the methodological approach of this work, and the detailed methods and procedures used during data collection.

Chapters 5 through 7 present original research exploring social contextual factors relevant to sexual risk behaviors of recently released black men in order to understand the mechanisms behind such behaviors and implications for subsequent HIV/STI risk. In chapter 5, manuscript 1 investigates recently released black men's sexual encounters by identifying the people with whom they have sex, how the encounters are established, and factors that influence them to use condoms during these encounters. This study illuminates the ways recently released black men obtain sexual partners and how that may differentially impact their risk for HIV and other sexually transmitted infections.

The second and third manuscripts build on the first by exploring how black men's recently released status influences their interactions with their social environment and the subsequent impact on HIV/STI risk. In chapter 6, manuscript 2 examines how participants recently released status potentially affects the dynamics of sexual partnering between recently released black men and their sex partners. This study reveals men's perceptions of their own sexual desirability among women immediately after release, and their perceived ability to negotiate sex with women after release.

In chapter 7, manuscript 3 explores factors that influence high-risk sexual behavior among recently released black men and discusses how those influences are shaped by gender norms. This study shows that participants are motivated to have sex by their physical needs for sexual release and by actions of their peer-group, which promote engagement in sexual risk behaviors.

Finally, chapter 8 summarizes and ties together the findings from this body of work. Public Health implications and suggestions for prevention programming and future research are discussed.

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Chapter 2: Background and Significance

2.1 Incarceration of Black Men and Health Consequences

2.1.1 Incarceration of Black Men

The US has the highest incarceration rate of any country with rates climbing to unprecedented heights since the declaration of the “War on Drugs” in 1970 (Hartney, 2006). In 2014, 1.5 million US adults were incarcerated (E. Carson, 2015). And while the number of adults behind bars has been on the rise over past decades, incarceration rates have increased disproportionately among some groups.

Black males comprise the largest group of US adults currently incarcerated, accounting for more than 30% of all males behind bars with rates nearly 6 times greater than those of white males (E. Carson, 2015). The reasons for such disparate rates of incarceration are historically complex, but have been perpetuated by disparities in criminal justice practices and policies (Hartney & Vuong, 2009; Mauer M., 2003).

The disparities in incarceration of black men is explained in part by higher involvement in crime, but law enforcement policies and practices, such as racial profiling or greater scrutiny of black men, also play a critical role (Durose, Smith, & Langan, 2007; Forman, 2012; Mauer, 2011).

There is also evidence that race plays a role in sentencing. In recent decades new laws and policies have been implemented in response to growth in drug related violence and crime (e.g. mandatory minimum sentences). While perhaps unintentional, these laws have resulted in racial disparities in sentencing. Differences in sentencing policies involving powder and crack forms of cocaine are particularly illustrative. In 1986 and 1988 congress enacted federal policies that would require the same mandatory sentence for sale of 500 grams of powder cocaine as it would for only 5 grams of crack cocaine (Mauer, 2011; Warde, 2012). Because crack cocaine offenders are far more likely to be black, and powder cocaine offenders white, this had tremendous impact

on already existing racial disparities in sentencing and incarceration rates. In 2010 congress changed the policy, increasing the threshold from 5 grams to 28 grams for crack cocaine. Ultimately this reduced sentencing disparities, but because there remains such a large difference in possession thresholds between crack and powder cocaine needed to enforce minimum sentencing, this policy continues to perpetuate racial disparities in incarceration rates.

For many of the same reasons that contribute to disproportionate incarceration rates, black men also have the highest rates of criminal recidivism of any other group (Jung, Spjeldnes, & Yamatani, 2010; Reisig, Bales, Hay, & Wang, 2007). Previous work indicates that race is an important predictor of recidivism even after considering criminal history, length of sentence served, and offense (Mears, Wang, Hay, & Bales, 2008). Significantly more black men, compared to white men, recidivate within the first 12 months of release – a disparity that increases with time since release (Jung et al., 2010). Black men also return to prisons and jails sooner after release than white men (Jung et al., 2010). These data suggest high turnover of incarcerated black men. And for predominantly black communities with high incarceration rates, recidivism of black men is a significant social and public health concern.

2.1.2 Incarceration and Health

The statistics for incarceration and recidivism among black men are certainly sobering, but the importance of this issue is compounded when the health implications of both are considered. Existing public health literature suggests that prisoners are disproportionately affected by a number of diseases (James & Glaze, 2006; Lobato, Leary, & Simone, 2003; Wakeman, Mckinney, & Rich, 2005). For example, nearly half of the incarcerated population meets the DSM IV requirements for drug/alcohol dependence or abuse (dependence is defined by a cluster of behaviors or physiological effects occurring within at 12 month time period such as tolerance, withdrawal and continued use despite mounting consequences). Substance abuse is characterized by a cluster of behaviors such as recurrent use in dangerous settings and legal problems, plus a

diagnosis of dependence (Mumola, 2004; 4th ed.; *DSM-4*). And, largely due to the number of individuals using illicit drugs, the correctional population has a high concentration HIV positive persons – with prevalence rates approximately 3 times higher than in the general population (Josiah D Rich et al., 2011).

The health outcomes associated with incarceration are not confined to correctional facilities, but have great relevance for communities, particularly those highly affected by incarceration. In the next section I review the ways in which high incarceration rates impact low-income black communities, focusing on sexual health.

2.1.3 Incarceration and Sexual Health in Black Communities

Black males are incarcerated more than any other demographic group in the US (E. Carson, 2015). Because incarceration is often a symptom of broader systematic shortcomings, many black communities with high incarceration rates are also affected by other adverse structural factors such as poverty, unstable housing and unemployment (Justice Policy Institute, 2015; Western & Pettit, 2010). An under-examined consequence of high rates of incarceration within black communities is that this can be a strong social force which can alter sexual networks and sexual risk for community members (Aral, Adimora, & Fenton, 2008).

Black men's disproportionately high rates of incarceration can impact the sexual health of communities in a number of important ways. First, largely due to the number of persons with histories of substance use and high-risk sexual behaviors, incarcerated individuals are more likely to have HIV/STIs. As a result, having sex with someone with an incarceration history may increase the risk of HIV/STI transmission (Barry, Kent, & Klausner, 2009; Khan, Epperson, et al., 2011; Swartzendruber, Brown, Sales, Murray, & DiClemente, 2012). For communities with particularly high rates of incarceration, the impact of high-risk sexual behaviors of recently released black men have even greater potential for negative health effects. A recent study,

conducted in Atlanta, GA, found that census tracts with high rates of incarceration among black men also had correlating increased incidence of STI. Furthermore, census tracts with increasing rates of incarceration among black men had more rapidly increasing incidence of STI (Dauria, Elifson, Arriola, Wingood, & Cooper, 2015). Work exploring associations between sex with a recently released male partner and STI risk for females, found that females with a recently released male partner were more likely to use condoms inconsistently and to have newly diagnosed Chlamydia (Swartzendruber et al., 2012). A similar study, with a predominately black sample, indicated that women who had an incarcerated partner within the last 12 months were more than two times as likely to have been newly infected with an STI (Rogers et al., 2012).

Second, high rates of incarceration among black men significantly change the size and composition of sexual networks in ways that promote the spread of HIV and other STI. Because black men are incarcerated at rates more than 20 times that of black women, the number of men available for sexual partnering can be dramatically reduced in addition to the already existing lack of available men due to violent crime and early mortality (Adaora a Adimora & Schoenbach, 2002; E. A. Carson & Sabol, 2012; Geronimus, Bound, Waidmann, Hillemeier, & Burns, 1996; Laumann & Youm, 1999; Majors & Billson, 1992). A low sex ratio reduces the number of available men for sexual partnering and increases the frequency of concurrent partnerships (AA Adimora et al., 2001; Ferguson, Quinn, Eng, & Sandelowski, 2006) which alone promotes the transmission of HIV/STI. Because there are now more women available to fewer men, women also experience a loss in their ability to negotiate condom use, and the level of commitment associated with these sexual partnerships (Kerrigan, Andrinopoulos, Chung, Glass, & Ellen, 2008; Wingood & Diclemente, 2000). Incarceration also contributes to dissolution of existing sexual partnerships. Subsequently, women whose partners become incarcerated may become involved in high-risk sexual partnerships to attain financial support, or fulfill their needs for physical and emotional intimacy (Dauria, Elifson, Arriola, Wingood, & Cooper, 2015; Khan et al.,

2011).

While high rates of incarceration can change the size and composition of sexual networks in ways that increase the spread of HIV/AIDS and other STI's, the subsequent release of incarcerated men can have equally important impacts on the sexual health of communities. An important focus for future research is contextualizing HIV sexual risk behaviors among recently released black men and garner understanding on how incarceration contributes to high-risk sexual behaviors of black men after release.

2.2 Reentry and Health

2.2.1 Reentry Overview

As of 2007, the incarceration rate in the US had increased seven-fold over the course of only 30 years, largely due to increases in prison admissions for drug-related charges and parole violations (Raphael, 2011). With most individuals serving shorter sentences, increases in incarceration rates has led to subsequent increases in the number of individuals cycling in and out of correctional facilities (Raphael, 2011).

Nearly 650,000 inmates are released from correctional facilities each year, but reentry has only recently come to the forefront as a national concern (Harrison & Karberg, 2003; Mears et al., 2008; Travis & Visher, 2005). In 2005, the issue received national attention when \$100 million in federal monies were allocated to states to support ex-offender reentry initiatives (Petersilia, 2009; Travis & Visher, 2005; Wolff, Shi, & Schumann, 2012). A few years later the Second Chance Act (P.L. 110-199) was signed into law to improve outcomes of thousands of former inmates being released from correctional facilities each year. The help of this legislation led to the establishment of The National Reentry Resource Center, under the auspices of the US Department of Justice, and spurred initiative for major research efforts like the Criminal Justice Drug Abuse Treatment Studies, sponsored by the National Institutes of Health. These changes

represent increased efforts to learn more about the lives of former inmates after release. And so, in recent years research in this area has burgeoned with much focus on the vulnerability associated with this time period and the challenges faced by former inmates once released from correctional facilities (e.g. housing instability, unemployment, substance abuse, difficulty accessing healthcare, changing social ties etc.). This will be discussed in further detail in the remainder of this section.

2.2.2 Socioeconomic Challenges of Reentry

For many, reentry proves to be challenging. Recently released inmates struggle with housing, finding employment, accessing healthcare and drug treatment, and reestablishing personal relationships. At the same time, some battle substance use disorders, temptations to return to a life of crime, and stigmas associated with being a former inmate (Austin, Hardyman, Irwin, & Francisco, 2002; Visser & Lattimore, 2007; Wolff et al., 2012). This is complicated further by the fact that the social skills needed to face these challenges often diminish during incarceration and many correctional facilities do not effectively prepare soon-to-be released inmates (Draine & Wolff, 1998). The goal of incarceration is to rehabilitate convicted persons, but paradoxically the experience of incarceration in some ways makes successful rehabilitation unlikely (Gordon et al., 2012), especially in the context of an overburdened criminal justice system whose function has been impeded by the growing incarcerated population. As a result, many inmates, particularly those who have served longer sentences or have been in and out of correctional facilities, are ill-equipped to successfully reenter outside society (Draine & Wolff, 1998; Wolff et al., 2012).

In addition to lacking the skills necessary to face the challenges associated with reentry, many inmates return to communities that are not conducive to successful reentry. Often former inmates are returning to impoverished communities in which employment opportunities are severely limited, housing is unstable, and criminal involvement is common or perhaps even necessary for survival (Luther, Reichert, Holloway, Roth, & Aalsma, 2011). In fact, research has shown that

these community attributes have a substantial impact on crime and incarceration rates, but may also be predictive of whether or not persons begin or choose to exit a life of crime (Austin et al., 2002; Hallett, 2011; Sampson & Laub, 1993). Considering this context, it is typical for recently released persons to return to similar behaviors or engage in increased levels of high-risk activities after returning home. This is demonstrated in a study by Rich et al which found that 30% of released inmates are rearrested within the first 6 months and 67.5% within 3 years (J D Rich et al., 2001) suggesting a return to involvement in criminal activity. High-risk activities, however, are not limited to criminal involvement. The period of time following incarceration poses considerable risk for engagement in risky sexual behavior, which can have important impacts on health and well being of former inmates and their communities (Epperson et al., 2010; Khan et al., 2009; Khan, Wohl, et al., 2008; Morrow et al., 2007). In the next section I will review the literature on sexual risk behaviors of men with histories of incarceration.

2.2.3 Sexual Risk Behaviors of Recently Released Men

The literature describing the association between incarceration and sexual risk behaviors, which is the foundation of this work, is distinct from reentry literature. This literature has inconsistencies with regards to the proximity of participant's incarceration experience, with much of it demonstrating associations between incarceration history and sexual risk behavior for participants who had been incarcerated within the past year (Epperson et al., 2010; Khan, Wohl, et al., 2008; Khan et al., 2009). This work will use the term recently released men to refer to men who have been released within the past year, and will refer to sex reported as occurring within the early weeks after release as post-release sex. The time period in which these behaviors occur will be referred to as the post-release time period.

The association between incarceration and high-risk sexual behavior is well established (Adams et al., 2011; Epperson et al., 2010; Khan, Wohl, et al., 2008; Khan et al., 2009; Margolis et al., 2006; Morrow et al., 2007; Rogers et al., 2012). Using a national sample, Khan et al demonstrated

that 42% of men with self-reported history of incarceration within the past year had multiple partnerships, compared to only 16% of men without recent incarceration (Khan et al., 2009). Moreover, work by Adams et al showed at one year post-release men had, on average, five sexual partners, with 25% of the sample reporting having unprotected sex with non-long term partners (Adams et al., 2011). In addition to having multiple sexual partnerships, men with histories of incarceration within the past year have been shown to be less likely to use condoms compared to men without that history regardless of partner type (Khan et al., 2009). These studies suggest that men who have been incarcerated are more likely to report engagement in high-risk sexual behavior than those without that history. However, these studies have limited ability to identify the ways in which incarceration contributes to these behaviors. For example, the 2008 Khan study found that participants with recent histories of incarceration were more likely to engage in risky sexual behavior (Khan, Miller, et al., 2008). However, this study did not evaluate time since release, number of prior incarcerations, or reason for incarceration - all of which may be important factors that might explain incarcerations contribution to sexual risk behaviors. Furthermore, these studies do not ask men about the sexual behaviors they engaged in at the time of release. As a result, these data may not capture behaviors men may be engaging in soon after release from correctional facilities, which some evidence suggest may be a critical period for high-risk behavior and relevant for disease transmission (Epperson et al., 2010; Margolis et al., 2006; Morrow et al., 2007; Stephenson et al., 2006; Wilson, Kinlock, Gordon, O'Grady, & Schwartz, 2012).

Much of what we know about the association between men with criminal histories and sexual risk behaviors comes from cross-sectional or retrospective studies which are not able to draw conclusions on behaviors occurring in the critical weeks and months following release. However, there is some evidence which suggests high-risk sexual behavior, though not isolated to weeks following release, is exaggerated in this time frame (Epperson et al., 2010; MacGowan et al.,

2003; Morrow et al., 2007; Wilson et al., 2012). One study on HIV risk behaviors of recently incarcerated men reported 967 sexual events among 77 men in the first week following release. Only 24% of those men reported using condoms during that time period, though few considered the sexual events risky presumably because more than 60% of these sexual events occurred with committed partners (Morrow et al., 2007). However, given what we know about the impacts of incarceration on long-term partnerships, at least some of these sexual events are likely high risk (Khan, Behrend, et al., 2011; Rogers et al., 2012). A study with former incarcerated men in Baltimore City found similar trends within the first month post-release, but shows risky sexual behavior trending upward within the first three months with subsequent declines (Wilson et al., 2012). These data suggest that the weeks following release are critical with respect to risky sexual behavior and potentially sexual health outcomes. Within a low-income, predominately black urban setting where turnover of correctional populations is high and STIs and HIV/AIDS are common, this may be an important mode of HIV transmission with important implications for HIV/STI prevention.

Epperson and colleagues (2010) present evidence that suggests that incarceration uniquely contributes to risky sexual behaviors among recently released. After accounting for potential confounders, (e.g., race/ethnicity, education, income, housing status, drug use history, etc.) results indicate that among recently released men, incarceration was associated with increased incidence of unprotected vaginal sex six months after release. However, while this study suggests a temporal relationship between incarceration and sexual risk behavior, it has important limitations. Length of incarceration and recidivism were not adjusted for in data analysis. Both of these factors could have important influence on post-release sexual behaviors and their inclusion may have identified important associations. Recidivism, for example, is common and Epperson (2010) does not tell us anything about how serving multiple sentences may affect propensity to engage in risky sex. Arguably, men who recidivate have the most potential to affect community

health outcomes and so understanding their behaviors is increasingly important. These are important considerations when thinking beyond the relationship between incarceration and high-risk sexual behavior and elucidating factors that drive or explain this relationship.

Despite extensive research suggesting a strong association between involvement in the criminal justice system and risk behaviors among men, there is little consensus on why this association might exist. One study identified that men using alcohol or drugs around the time of sex were more likely to have risky sex, which is important especially considering the prevalence of alcohol and drug use in this population, but is only one contributor to a behavior which is likely influenced by many factors (MacGowan et al., 2003). Acknowledging the complexity of this issue, other plausible explanations have been postulated. First, it is likely many inmates will have had unmet sexual desires while incarcerated. As a result they may be more likely to engage in risky sexual behaviors after release to satisfy those desires. Second, the social and economic vulnerabilities associated with reentry (e.g. housing instability, financial hardship, unemployment, relationship issues etc.) may lead to higher propensity for engaging in spontaneous risky sexual behaviors. Furthermore, disruptions in social networks and social capital may have influence on norms related to sexual behaviors (Epperson et al., 2010; Latkin, Forman, Knowlton, & Sherman, 2003). In order to fully grapple with these potential constructs we need to take a step back and critically examine the experience of both incarceration and reentry for black men in order to understand how those experiences influence risky sexual behavior after release.

2.2.4 Rationale for the focus on Black Men

Black men have the most severe burden of HIV in the US; in 2010 they accounted for approximately 70% of all new infections among blacks living in the US, with an estimated rate of new infection seven times as high as the infection rates for white men (CDC, 2012). They are also incarcerated more often than any other group. Black males currently account for more than 30% of all incarcerated males, with rates of incarceration that are nearly six times greater than those of

white males (E. Carson, 2015). Black men also have the highest rates of criminal recidivism of any other group (Jung et al., 2010; Reisig et al., 2007). Subsequently the turnover of black men in the correctional population is high and tens of thousands are released from correctional facilities every year. Because evidence suggests that incarceration contributes to black men's disproportionately high risk of HIV and other STIs, this issue has great public health relevance (Ricks, Crosby, & Terrell, 2015; Rogers et al., 2012). Current literature has not identified significant differences in frequency of sexual risk behaviors between white and black men (A. A. Adimora et al., 2006; Ricks et al., 2015). However, the consequences associated with these behaviors are measurably greater for black men, due to size and composition of black sexual networks and the prevalence of infection – particularly in low-income urban settings (Aral et al., 2008; Hallfors, Iritani, Miller, & Bauer, 2007). Black men's HIV/STI risk is complex and associated with incarceration. It is critical to explore the mechanisms by which incarceration history impact's their risk.

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Chapter 3: Theoretical Perspectives

3.0 Socio-ecological Perspective

Black men have the most severe burden of HIV in the US (CDC, 2012), but this disparate burden is not coincidental. Consistent with the socio-ecological perspective, there are a number of factors that potentially influence individual behavior, ultimately contributing to this disparity (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Macrostructural factors (Table 3.1) such as economic disadvantage, racial discrimination, racial inequality, unemployment, and disproportionate incarceration profoundly shape black men's HIV/STI risk (Adaora a Adimora & Schoenbach, 2002, 2005; Aral et al., 2008; Bowleg & Raj, 2012). The adverse socioeconomic environment, in which many young black men live promote transmission of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections by negatively impacting community, interpersonal, and intrapersonal level factors. Specifically socioeconomic constraints hinder committed partnering and increase participation in concurrent partnerships, as discussed in the previous chapter, but also fosters the creation of social norms which perpetuate these patterns of sexual partnering (Adaora a Adimora & Schoenbach, 2005; Aral et al., 2008; Dauria, Oakley, et al., 2015).

Table 3.1: Factors Influencing Sexual Behaviors of Recently Released Black Men based on the Ecological Model

Macrostructural	Community	Interpersonal	Intrapersonal
<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Poverty■ Institutionalized Racial Discrimination■ Laws and Policies■ Differential Opportunity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Community Norms■ Racialized Gender Norms■ Social Institutions (Prisons and Jails)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Social Networks■ Sexual Networks■ Peer Group■ Group Membership	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Attitudes and Perceptions■ Internalization of norms■ Internal Motivations

Sources: (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Adaora A Adimora & Schoenbach, 2002, 2005; Aral et al., 2008; Bowleg & Raj, 2012; Dauria, Oakley, et al., 2015)

This work focuses on understanding the social context in which high-risk sexual behaviors of recently released black men take place to identify mechanisms behind such behaviors. Adopting a

socio-ecological perspective, this work intends to contextualize HIV/STI risk among recently released men focusing primarily on intrapersonal and interpersonal factors related to masculine gender norms, acknowledging the role of macrostructural factors in positioning and shaping these norms.

Gender norms are pervasive socially constructed ideas about acceptable behavior for men and women, roles, and characteristics and can have powerful influences on health related behavior (Gupta, 2000). In particular, research on masculinity theory indicates that gender roles can influence sexual behaviors of men, often encouraging high risk sexual behavior such as multiple and concurrent sexual partnerships both which can increase HIV/STI risk (Fleming & Agnew-Brune, 2015; Reidy, Brookmeyer, Gentile, Berke, & Zeichner, 2015). The remainder of this chapter will review masculine gender theory, as it is relevant to the lives of low-income recently released black men, and their sexual behaviors. This work integrates masculine gender theory into the exploration of the sexual behaviors of recently released men as an important contextual factor influencing sexual behavior.

3.1 Black Masculinity

What it means to be a black man in the US is often described as an expression of manhood born out of struggle to achieve according to a Eurocentric ideal of manliness. Black men operate in a uniquely difficult space in which there are societal pressures to be upwardly mobile providers while living within a system which places very real constraints on their potential to do so (Nickleberry & Coleman, 2012; Spraggins, 1999). For some, living up to masculine norms requires overcoming limited educational opportunities, few employment options, systematic racial discrimination, and a criminal justice system which disproportionately incarcerates black men (E. Carson, 2015; Nickleberry & Coleman, 2012; Whitehead, Peterson, & Kaljee, 1994). Black men living in low-income settings, in particular, have fewer resources to overcome these obstacles. Denied the opportunities to fulfill the societal definition of manhood some, though not

all, have responded to these structural and systematic constraints by expressing masculinity in ways consistent with their marginalization (Harris, 1995).

To counteract the inability to live up to stereotypical masculine norms, some black men of low income and social status reconstruct a masculinity predicated on sexual prowess, aggression, violence, and homophobia (Glick, Gangl, Gibb, Klumpner, & Weinberg, 2007; Goff, Di Leone, & Kahn, 2012; Harris, 1995). The literature describes this as a reactionary masculinity, rather than vulnerability, and it is postulated to be associated with impassiveness, preoccupation with heterosexual expression, distrust of institutions and authority, reliance on validation from peers, and displays of power – not vulnerability (Harris, 1995; Majors & Billson, 1992). Providing economic support for family is central to masculine identity (Connell, 1995). There are imbalances in access to power and means to achieve economic success in the formal economy are restricted, and so illegal activities, like selling drugs, can be viewed as an opportunity for achievement (Whitehead et al., 1994). As a result, participation in illegal activity is not uncommon among low-income, young, black men. While this conduct may be objectively destructive and counterproductive, these alternative behaviors allow for personal achievement and self-esteem building, which may otherwise be unobtainable in limiting circumstances (Harris, 1995; Mahalik, Pierre, & Wan, 2006). Furthermore, these activities are often among the most lucrative available to them, allowing access to goods for meeting basic needs and symbolizing their achievement. Importantly though, the effects of these behaviors extend beyond the individual and have had significant impacts on low-resourced neighborhoods and communities (such as black-on-black violence, incarceration, HIV/AIDS, and STIs). Those behaviors that are contributing to rising HIV/AIDS rates, such as those that perpetuate masculine norms and exemplify sexual prowess, are of particular importance to this work.

3.2 Black Masculinity and Sexuality

It has been postulated that the powerlessness that accompanies an inability to successfully

perform traditional masculine roles (e.g. financial provider) threatens the masculinity of some marginalized men; subsequently some men feel compelled to restore their masculinity by enacting a perversion of traditional masculine values (Bowleg et al., 2011a; Harris, 1995; Majors & Billson, 1992). Empirical evidence suggests that men may respond to these threats by regularly proving their masculinity using sexual promiscuity and aggression (Copenhaver, Lash, & Eisler, 2000; Goff et al., 2012; Harris, 1995). The violence that results from aggressive behavior is an important public health issue in its own right. However, this discussion will focus on impact that black masculine ideologies have on sexual activity.

In the face of an unrelenting HIV/AIDS epidemic among black men and women in the US, it is important to understand the ways in which black masculine ideologies drive particular sexual behaviors. Though much of the empirical and theoretical literature regarding masculinity and sexual risk behaviors has been garnered through studies of college students (most of whom were white and middle class), there have been recent efforts to understand how these masculine ideologies influence sexual behaviors in marginalized groups (Bowleg et al., 2011a; LaPollo, Bond, & Lauby, 2013; Plummer, 2013; Reidy et al., 2015).

In a qualitative study of masculinity and sexuality among black men in Philadelphia, one participant stated, *“Black men feel like you’re not a man unless you have a whole lot of partners, multiple partners, and [that if you do not] have as many so-called freaky [sexually uninhibited] experiences as possible, you’re not a man. That’s society’s expectations on us, and we of course [have] bought into those similar stereotypes.”* (Bowleg et al., 2011a). This is powerful because it highlights the intersection between masculinity and sexual identity. Related work also suggest that black men who conform to hypermasculine norms are more reluctant to use condoms, with one study suggesting that for some black men condom use is viewed as “undermining their masculinity or virility (Oparanozie, Sales, DiClemente, & Braxton, 2012; Rhodes et al., 2011; Wolfe, 2003). For black men with few ways to participate in an economically driven patriarchal

society, expressions of manliness through sexual promiscuity may become a way to defend and reaffirm masculinity. As a consequence, for some, multiple and concurrent partners or aversion to condom use becomes normative and provides a means to gain respect from and bond with other men (Bowleg et al., 2011b; Harris, 1995) .

Part of masculine identity in the US dominant culture is no doubt defined, in some ways, relative to what qualities do not constitute manliness (Ward, 2005). And so, homosexuality needs to be included as part of the discussion of the masculinity framework. Hegemonic notions of masculinity in the US are associated with dominance, independence, and strength (Jakupcak, 2003; Seal & Ehrhardt, 2003; Ward, 2005). Connell argues that, in modern American society part of this dominance has been exemplified through the subordination of homosexual men - positioning “homosexual masculinities at the bottom of a gender hierarchy among men” (Connell, 1995). Essentially, “gayness, in a patriarchal ideology, is the repository of whatever is symbolically expelled from hegemonic masculinity“ (Connell, 1995). Because the black masculine ideal has been traditionally centered on toughness and heterosexual prowess, the conflict between hegemonic masculinity and homosexuality is exaggerated among black men. Hypermasculine gender expectations of black men directly oppose the stereotypic femininity associated with gayness (Ward, 2005). As a result the sentiment that “real black men are heterosexual, not men who have sex with men” is not uncommon (Bowleg et al., 2011b).

3.3 Integration of Theory

No different from any other behavior, sexual behaviors are complex, influenced by a variety of social and contextual factors. This work explores the social context of sex and HIV/STI risk of recently released black men using a socio ecological perspective on HIV/STI risk behaviors among black populations, and masculine gender theory as it relates to black men, sexuality, and sexual risk behaviors. These major theories have informed the objectives of this work, instruments used to collect data, as well as the analysis and interpretation of findings.

3.4 Theoretical Assumptions

As this work seeks a comprehensive understanding of the relevancy of social context in influencing sexual risk behaviors and HIV/STI risk of recently released black men, there are several important assumptions made. Race and gender are understood to be social constructs, or ideas and phenomena sanctioned or created by social groups (i.e. society). And race and gender as social constructs are important aspects of social context, and powerfully impact human behavior. Of focus in this body of work is sexual behavior, which, at least in part, is assumed to be a product of the expectations imposed by race and gender constructs. These assumptions have

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Chapter 4: Methods

4.1 Rationale for Qualitative Methods

The present study examines the social context of sexual risk behaviors among recently released black men, and builds upon existing research by exploring the norms and practices relevant to the dynamics of sexual partnering after men are released from correctional facilities. Furthermore, by building upon previous findings indicating marked sexual risk behavior among recently released men with some evidence suggesting that such behaviors were independently associated with having been incarcerated (Epperson et al., 2010), this work begins to contextualize HIV sexual risk behaviors in a subset of the criminal justice population.

The use of qualitative methods was critical to rigorously examine the norms and practices related to the dynamics of sexual partnering between recently released black men and their partners. Qualitative inquiry allows for in-depth exploration of a particular phenomenon, producing knowledge that is contextually anchored. Rooted in a constructivist epistemology, this work was conducted under the assumption that truth and meaning are constructed. As a result individuals may have varying perceptions of truth and meaning even for a single phenomenon. The researcher cannot exist outside of a particular construction of reality; rather she and her own perceptions and truths are a part of the construction of reality that occurs between researcher and participant throughout data collection and later in interpretation and analysis (James and Busher, 2009).

4.2 Participants

20 men between the ages of 21 and 45, mean age 33, were enrolled in the present study. The sample included men living in Baltimore City who were released from either a prison or jail between 0.375 and 13 months prior to the interview, with a mean time since release of 3.8 months. Participants were most recently incarcerated between 3 and 225 months (18.75 years) with a

median time served of 23 months (mean= 49 months). Participants had between 1 and 12 lifetime incarcerations (mean=6). The majority of participants (19) had been incarcerated more than once.

19 participants self – identified as black, and one self-identified as white. In regards to sexual orientation, in response to the question “what is your sexual identity” one participant answered homosexual and all others answered heterosexual. Nine participants indicated that they were in a relationship and all others were single. The majority of participants (15) reported having one or more children, while others reported having no children. The participant who identified as homosexual was the only participant that answered yes to having ever had sexual contact with other inmates while incarcerated.

Most participants of this study were recruited from community organizations that offer resources to recently released citizens. So, most were engaged with community services at the time of enrollment. Participants were receiving a variety of resources and support including interpersonal skill development, job readiness services, educational equivalency programs, case management, substance abuse treatment, and vocational training to facilitate successful reintegration into society and their communities.

4.3 Procedures

4.3.1 Recruitment

Participants for this research were recruited using three different methods: primarily, participants were recruited from Baltimore Community–Based Organizations providing services for recently released men. However, study participants were also recruited from HIV prevention studies conducted at the Lighthouse Studies at Peer Point in Baltimore, Maryland. Snowball sampling techniques with enrolled participants were also used to increase recruitment. In total 15 participants were recruited from CBOs, four were recruited through snowball sampling, and the

final participant was recruited from an HIV prevention study. Each method of recruitment will be discussed in detail below.

- 1) Community-based organizations: Community Based Organizations across the city were identified as potential recruitment spots based upon whether or not they provided services that recently released men were likely to use, based upon previous empirical evidence about the sample population (Visser, Kachnowski, Vigne, & Travis, 2004). Using this evidence as a guide, organizations that offered the following services were selected: reentry programs, case management, substance abuse treatment, mental health services, counseling, educational equivalency, vocational training, and job readiness. Based upon that criteria the following organizations in Baltimore City were chosen: Group Ministries, Druid Heights Community Development Inc, Penn North Community Resource Center, Rose Street Community Center, The Men and Families Center, Jericho Reentry Program, Transitioning Lives, Northwest One-Stop Career Center, Gaudenzia, Dee's Place, and the Safe and Sound Campaign.

After these organizations were selected the student investigator contacted each either by phone, or in person, to provide representatives with information about the study and then inquire about the feasibility of either posting a study flyer or holding an active recruitment session. All organizations were willing to allow the student investigator to post a study flyer, while others suggested it would be more fruitful if the student investigator came at an arranged time to do active recruitment. The student investigator also worked with a case manager and a staff member at two organizations, who referred their clients directly to the student investigator.

The student investigator held several active recruitment events at several organizations. Staff members at those organizations suggested the study be presented during

organization-sponsored events where men meeting the study criteria were most likely to attend. At those events, the study was presented briefly, and the student investigator spoke individually with potential participants. At this time the men were screened, their contact information was recorded and, if they met the study eligibility criteria, interviews were scheduled and conducted at a later date at the Lighthouse Studies at Peer Point.

- 2) HIV Prevention Studies: Current participants of HIV prevention studies conducted at the Lighthouse Studies at Peer Point were recruited using passive advertisement for the current study. The study flyer was posted in the lobby area, and men who were interested contacted the student investigator. Those men who contacted the study team were subsequently screened to determine their eligibility. Interviews were scheduled with those participants who were eligible and interested in participating.
- 3) Snowball Sampling: At the completion of each interview participants were asked if they would be willing to provide study information to men they know who may have been interested in participating. Subsequently, willing participants were given a copy of the study referral card. Referred men who contacted the study team were screened to determine their eligibility. Interviews were scheduled with those participants who were eligible and interested in participating.

4.3.2 Screening for Eligibility

Prospective participants were screened for eligibility, by phone or in person, using the following inclusion criteria: men, age between 21-40 years, and a history of incarceration that fulfilled at least one of the following criteria

- Released in the last 12 months after serving at least one consecutive year in either a prison (state or federal) or jail

- Released within the last 12 months after serving 2 or more consecutive months in either a prison (state or federal) or jail and have been released in the past 3 years after serving at least one consecutive year.

This criterion was chosen to enroll men who had both significant (based upon length of time) and recent incarceration experiences, and was guided by existing literature in which studies conducted in this population is done so with participants released within the past year. It was important to enroll men who would be able to draw upon a variety of types of incarceration experiences and be able to do so with minimal recall bias. Those who met these eligibility criteria were interviewed. Participants who were unable to complete the study due to physical or mental illness or impairment were excluded from the study. Due to miscommunication between the student investigator and prospective participant, a participant of age 45 was enrolled and completed an interview with the understanding that the participant was 25 years of age. After the interview was completed the participant filled out a demographic survey. Later, upon review of that survey, the student investigator discovered he was 45 years of age. This participant was not excluded from the analysis because he was enrolled in the study in accordance with study protocol..

46 men were screened and 20 were enrolled into the study. Men who were not enrolled in the study were ineligible due to age, time since release, and time served.

4.3.3 Data Collection

The student investigator conducted 23 semi structured in-depth interviews (Appendix A), with 20 participants at the Lighthouse Studies at Peer Point. Each participant was verbally consented, and all interviews were tape recorded, and later transcribed by either the student investigator or a professional transcription service. After each interview was completed participants filled out a brief demographic survey (Appendix B) and were asked if they would be willing to pass on a study referral card to someone they knew might be interested in participating in the study. This snowball technique was used to expand study recruitment. Most participants were interviewed

once, however 3 participants were asked to complete follow-up interviews. This provided an opportunity to address questions that were not asked in the first interview, and further explore emergent themes after preliminary analysis of interview transcripts. The second interviews addressed topics included in the interview guide, but varied based upon participants' responses from the first interview. Each participant received \$25 for their time and effort, after the completion of the interview and demographic survey.

The in-depth interview guide (Appendix A) was developed using existing literature around masculinity, sexuality, incarceration, reentry, and sexual risk behaviors, with input from an experienced qualitative researcher and a staff member at one community based organization that had a recent incarceration history. The student investigator focused on developing an open-ended guide, which would facilitate an open discussion of masculine ideologies and sexual norms associated with incarceration and reentry. Eliciting the input of an individual with a history or recent incarceration who also spends significant time working with the sample population allowed for feedback on the relevancy, wording, and organization of the domain areas and questions. Participants were asked to focus their reflections on their most recent incarceration experience.

After conducting 12 interviews and reviewing interview transcripts, the student investigator identified new areas of exploration related to masculine identity/expression and sexual partnering that were relevant to sexual risk behaviors of recently released men. Consistent with the iterative approach of qualitative inquiry, several questions were added to the in-depth interview guide (Appendix C) to allow for continued exploration with future participants. Specific justifications for changes made are outlined below:

- Patterns around sexual partnering and sexual risk behaviors specific to reentry ,and relevant for sexual health outcomes for this population, were indentified. In order to

rigorously explore these patterns with future participants specific questions were added to the Sexual Behaviors domain of the interview guide to explore how men secure opportunities for sex after release, the importance of having sex upon release, and opinions and beliefs regarding condom use.

- Participants in the first half of data collection began to articulate ideas relevant to masculinity behind bars that were previously unknown and thus not included in the original interview guide. In order to facilitate full exploration of attitudes and beliefs about masculinity with future participants several questions were added to the Manhood and Masculinity Domain to explore the dichotomy of being a weak versus a strong inmate
- In all domains, some questions were reworded to reflect colloquialisms used by participants and/or to make questions clearer. These changes were made based upon how participants responded to various questions. For example if the majority of participants didn't understand a question, the question was reworded so that it would be clearer.

4.4 Sample Size Determination

For this work, the primary investigator purposefully selected men fitting the criterion discussed above because they could provide insight and inform a contextual understanding of sexual risk behaviors of black men recently released from correctional facilities. Initially, a target sample size of $N=25$ was determined based upon the 'nature' and 'scope' of the study, as well as practical considerations such as time and resources (Morse, 2000). As data collection began final sample size ($N=20$) was determined based upon the quality of data collected (i.e. richness and comprehensiveness) and the presence or absence of informational redundancy in areas of focus – motivations for sex, dynamics of sexual partnering after release, pathways to sex, and selection of sexual partners.

4.5 Data Analysis

Using several sampling strategies outlined in the previous section, the student investigator sought to construct a racially diverse sample of participants. These efforts yielded a sample of 19 black and one white participant. Because race is a critical social construct shaping HIV/STI risk of men, each manuscript comprising this research focuses only on the experiences of the 19 black participants. This allowed the student investigator to perform a rigorous analysis and present the most contextually relevant findings.

Nineteen transcripts were uploaded to MAXQDA, qualitative analysis software designed to assist with organizing, coding, and analyzing qualitative data. Data were analyzed using a combination of deductive and inductive approaches in a four-phase approach (Kavanaugh, n.d.). The first of these phases was data immersion, in which the student investigator repeatedly read transcripts to identify major organizing ideas. Each time a transcript was read, notes were taken and memos subsequently created outlining major themes emerging from a particular transcript. Major themes were then compared across all transcripts, which allowed for preliminary analysis around frequency and salience of major organizing concepts.

In the second phase the primary investigator developed and refined the coding scheme. A priori codes were developed based upon domains represented in the interview guide as well as literature on hegemonic masculinity, black masculinity, sexuality, and reentry. The coding scheme was refined using an iterative approach over three separate rounds of coding. In each round codes were applied according to definitions written within the schema. At the end of each round, the applicability of each code was assessed; and based on the assessment codes were either removed from the schema or the definition, name, or exclusion and inclusion criteria were adjusted. The need for new codes was also assessed at the completion of each round of coding. Emerging themes were added into the coding scheme as necessary to capture major concepts absent from the a priori coding scheme.

The final coding scheme was applied to the transcript data by both the student investigator (applied to the entire data set) and a second coder (applied to 10 transcripts of the data set). The student investigator and second coder met weekly to discuss the applicability of the coding scheme, quality of codes, and the need for adding new codes, or removing existing codes.

The third and fourth phases of analysis were guided by the Constant Comparative Method of Qualitative Analysis developed by Glaser (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). This method outlines a systematic approach to categorical analysis of data with the following steps: (1) *comparing incidents applicable to each category*, (2) *integrating categories and their properties* (3) *delimiting the theory*, and (4) *writing the theory*.

In the first step, similar incidents in the data were coded into categories by the student investigator. These categories were developed both deductively and inductively as described above. In this process, incidents within the same category were frequently compared, delineating theoretical dimensions and typologies present in each category. For example, if the data suggest engaging in high-risk sexual behavior after release is commonly associated with a belief of reaffirming manhood this may be adopted as a code. If within that code there are distinctions between reaffirming manhood through hyper sexuality but also through reinforcing bonds with other men who engage in similar behaviors this represents two distinct typologies within the same category. This facilitates the process of defining relationships between categories.

In the second step, the units of constant comparison changed. Instead of comparing incidents within a category resulting in different typologies the focus shifts to (2) *Integrating categories and their properties* – by comparing categories instead. The purpose of this method was to discover relationships between categories, which facilitated integrative thinking and theoretical development. The work on Grounded Theory by Strauss and Coubin refer to this as “axial coding,” a process that uses both deductive and inductive reasoning to relate codes based on a

framework of four basic relationships: (1) the phenomenon under study, (2) the conditions related to that phenomenon (context conditions, intervening, structural or causal conditions), (3) the actions and interactional strategies directed at managing or handling the phenomenon and (4) the consequences of the actions/interactions related to the phenomenon (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Using this method, relationships between various codes were established. The final steps, (3) delimiting the theory and (4) writing the theory drew upon the products of earlier steps to facilitating theory construction.

4.5.1 Quality Assurance

In scientific inquiry it is important to conduct studies rigorously. The same is true whether your work is rooted in an objectivist or constructivist epistemology. For this work, it is assumed that qualitative research has different philosophical and theoretical underpinnings than quantitative work and so the quality of this work would not be appropriately measured using quantitative criteria – objectivity, reliability, validity and generalizability. Instead, this work assumes a parallel perspective and uses an approach to quality assurance informed by Lincoln and Guba's Criteria of Trustworthiness, a set of guidelines and strategies to help conduct rigorous qualitative research rooted in a constructivist epistemology (Lincoln and Guba, 1985).

4.5.1a Credibility

Under an objectivist epistemology conclusions drawn from data are assumed to represent a single truth. However, a constructivist epistemology is consistent with existence of multiple realities, and so there is no one single truth. Findings that are credible are successful in representing the full breadth of the situation or idea of focus, having explored all possible realities. To ensure credibility this work used peer debriefing. Peer debriefing is a process where an investigator works with an unbiased peer who probes the investigators thinking around aspects of the research process. Lincoln and Guba describe two primary purposes for peer debriefing. The first of these is to give the investigator the opportunity to critically examine their findings with an impartial peer,

particularly within the context of their biases. The second is to support the iterative nature of qualitative research by giving the investigator an opportunity to work through emerging hypothesis and research design considerations. The primary investigator met with a graduate student, weekly to actively discuss data interpretations during coding and analysis. The graduate student and primary investigator shared each of their own insights and interpretations of the data and the primary investigator reconciled differences where she thought it was appropriate and offered a more credible interpretation of the data.

4.5.1b Dependability

The concept of reliability is based upon the positivist assumption that there is one single truth. However, a constructivist would assert that there are instead multiple realities garnered through an interaction between investigator and participant. So then, the findings may not be replicable should another investigator conduct the study. Instead of reliability, qualitative research employs a related concept called dependability, concerned with the consistency of findings. It is the investigators responsibility to densely describe the methods used to gather data, so that her research can be effectively critiqued by others (Kielhofner, 1982). For this work dependability was insured through external auditing, a process suggested by Lincoln and Guba in which another investigator attempts to follow the “decision trail” used in the study (Krefting, 1991; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The primary investigator met with a graduate student, who served as an external auditor, weekly during coding and analysis. The external auditor independently reviewed the transcript data and codebook, and discussed whether or not she agreed with the emergence and use of the codes. In general, she agreed with the coding schema, but made limited suggestions for revisions of existing codes, and addition of new codes. After the coding scheme was discussed, the external auditor applied the scheme to the data. The primary investigator and external auditor then met weekly to discuss congruence between their applications of the codes and the external auditor critiques of the coding or data interpretations.

4.5.1c Confirmability

Objectivity is a positivist concept referring to the level of bias in investigative work. The positivist assumption is that quality of research increases, as it becomes more and more value free. It is this assertion that encourages distance between researcher and participant and values methods that increase both reliability and validity of studies. Constructivists instead believe that there is no value free work and would argue that investigator biases are present at every phase of research. On the other hand qualitative researchers embrace interaction between themselves and participants, and in fact rely on that rapport to increase the validity of their findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). So instead of objectivity, qualitative research refers to confirmability and focuses on neutrality of the findings rather than that of the investigator (Krefting, 1991). To insure confirmability the student investigator worked with an external auditor, described above who regularly encouraged the student investigator to think about how her own personal biases might affect her interpretations of the data. Additionally the student investigator continued to be reflexive throughout data collection and analysis, and regularly wrote memos related to interview as well as analysis experiences.

4.5.1d Transferability

In qualitative research generalizability is understood differently from its interpretation in quantitative studies. The goal of research is to disseminate results and ideas that are widely applicable; and though the generalizability of qualitative results may be less obvious, thoughtful qualitative research has applicability beyond the bounds of the study to other contexts and populations. According to Lincoln and Guba it is the investigators' role to conduct thoughtful and rigorous research resulting in the collection of rich data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Subsequent contextual analysis, as outlined in the previous section, allows for thick description and a full account of the topic of interest. This is consistent with the investigators role for establishing transferability. It is not the investigators' responsibility to make a judgment on how transferable their findings are, rather it is their job to present findings adequate enough to be judged based on

transferability (Krefting, 1991; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The student investigator has made efforts to present rich contextual data and analysis in this body of work to ensure that it may be judged on the basis of whether or not it is transferrable.

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Chapter 5: Manuscript 1- How recently released black men obtain sex and use condoms.

5.1 Abstract

Evidence suggests recently released men engage in sex with multiple and concurrent sexual partners and report low rates of condom use, however there is limited research exploring the context of these sexual encounters, the people with whom they have sex, how the encounters are established, or perceptions about condom use in those encounters. This qualitative study explores the ways in which recently released black men attain sex partners and the factors that influence condom use during this period. In-depth interviews were conducted with 19 recently released black men living in Baltimore, Maryland. Domains of exploration included: manhood, sexuality, and sexual behavior related to their experiences behind bars and since their most recent release. Data were analyzed using a combination of inductive and deductive approaches. Most participants reported having sex upon release with casual partners, through peer-arranged sexual encounters, or with female sex workers; few reported sex with committed partners. Participants reported several factors that influenced their decision to use condoms during post-release sex including: the type of sexual partner, desires for enhanced sensation, and the need to satisfy sexual appetite. Findings indicate that recently released men may interface with high-risk sexual networks upon release and face barriers which may promote inconsistent condom use, both which potentially increase their HIV/STI risk.

5.2 Introduction

Black men have the most severe burden of HIV in the US with an incidence rate seven times higher than white men (CDC, 2012). Past research indicates that disparities in HIV incidence remain unexplained even after considering aspects of sexual risk behavior that promote the spread

of HIV (e.g. condom use, number of sexual partners, etc.) (A. A. Adimora et al., 2006; Aral et al., 2008; Ricks et al., 2015). Understanding social and structural factors that may be contributing to these persisting differences is critical to reducing HIV disparities among black men.

In addition to racial disparities in HIV/AIDS, there are critical racial disparities in incarceration rates. Black men are incarcerated at higher rates than any other demographic group in the United States. They currently account for more than 30% of all incarcerated men, with rates of incarceration that are nearly six times greater than those of white men (E. Carson, 2015). And while these differences on their own merit discussion, the intersection of the incarceration and HIV/AIDS epidemics are important as incarceration is a social force that has powerful impacts on sexual networks and HIV risk behaviors within and outside of prison walls (A. A. Adimora & Schoenbach, 2002; Dauria, Elifson, Arriola, Wingood, & Cooper, 2015; Dauria, Oakley, et al., 2015; Ricks et al., 2015; Thomas & Sampson, 2005).

Involvement in the criminal justice system, defined as arrest and incarceration, has been linked to increased HIV/STI sexual risk behaviors among men (Adams et al., 2011; Epperson et al., 2010; Khan et al., 2009; Khan, Wohl, et al., 2008; Ricks et al., 2015). Studies have demonstrated that men with self-reported history of incarceration within the past year were more likely to report multiple sexual partnerships (Khan et al., 2009; Khan, Wohl, et al., 2008) and sex with high-risk partners (Khan, Wohl, et al., 2008). In addition to having multiple sexual partnerships, men with histories of incarceration within the past year have been shown to be less likely to use condoms compared to men without that history regardless of partner type (Khan et al., 2009).

Much of what is known about sexual risk behaviors of men with recent histories of incarceration is limited to frequency of condom use, partner concurrency, and number of sexual partners (Epperson et al., 2010; Khan et al., 2009; Khan, Wohl, et al., 2008; Morrow et al., 2007). For example, existing research suggests that recently released men are more likely to report having

multiple sexual partners compared to men without incarceration history (Khan, Wohl, et al., 2008; Rogers et al., 2012). However, we do not fully understand the types of sexual partners recently released men engage with or the nature of those partnerships, both of which have implications for HIV/STI risk. Existing research also suggest that recently released men are more likely to have unprotected sex (Epperson et al., 2010). However, we do not understand how recently released men make decisions about condom use, nor do we understand the barriers or facilitators to condom use in post-release sex. In order to understand HIV/STI risk behavior among recently released men it is necessary to understand the types of sexual partners and encounters recently released men are having and the factors that influence decisions regarding condom use. Both factors are critical to fully characterizing HIV/STI risk. Accordingly, the objectives of the current study were to (1) Explore how recently released black men obtain sex during the immediate post-release period and (2) Explore the factors that influence recently released black men's condom use during the immediate post-release period

5.3 Study context

Baltimore is a city of predominately black residents (63.1%), many of who are living in under-resourced communities profoundly impacted by incarceration (US Census Bureau, 2015; Justice Policy Institute, 2015; Walsh, 2010). With an incarceration rate nearly three times higher than the national average, in 2010 nearly 8000 of Baltimore city's 622,793 residents were incarcerated in Maryland State facilities (Justice Policy Institute, 2015). Because incarceration is often a symptom of broader systematic shortcomings, many of the communities in Baltimore with the highest incarceration rates are extraordinarily challenged by addiction, housing issues, violent crime, poor educational attainment, and limited opportunities for employment (Justice Policy Institute, 2015). All of the men in this study were recruited from these disadvantaged communities in Baltimore City.

5.4 Methods

5.4.1 Participants

Nineteen black men released from prison or jail within the past 12 months were enrolled in the present study. The average age was 33 years ($SD = 6.4$). The average length of time since release was 3.8 months and the average length of time incarcerated was 50 months, or about 4 years. The majority of participants ($n=18$) had been incarcerated more than once, with an average of six lifetime incarcerations. All participants report a history of involvement in drug-related crime. One participant self-identified as homosexual, and all others self-identified as heterosexual. Nine participants indicated that they were in a relationship (defined as either married or having a girlfriend/boyfriend) and all others were single.

5.4.2 Recruitment

Study participants were recruited using three different methods: passive and active recruitment from Baltimore community based organizations (CBOs) that provide services for recently released men, recruitment from participants of HIV prevention studies conducted at a community-based research facility, and snowball sampling. Fourteen participants were recruited from CBOs, four were recruited through snowball sampling, and the final participant was recruited from an HIV prevention study. Because participants were primarily recruited from Baltimore CBOs, most participants were engaged with community services at the time of enrollment. Participants were receiving a variety of resources and support including interpersonal skill development, job readiness services, educational equivalency programs, case management, substance abuse treatment, and vocational training to facilitate successful reintegration into society and their communities.

5.4.3 Screening and Eligibility

Prospective participants were screened for eligibility, by phone or in person using the following inclusion criteria: male sex, age between 21-40 years, and a history of incarceration in which they were either (1) released in the last 12 months after serving at least one consecutive year in either a prison (state or federal) or jail or (2) released within the last 12 months after serving 2 or more consecutive months in either a prison (state or federal) or jail and have been released in the past 3 years after serving at least one consecutive year. The criterion for the present study was chosen to enroll men who had both significant (based upon length of time) and recent incarceration experiences, consistent with relevant literature.

5.4.4 Interview Instrument

A semi-structured interview instrument guide was developed using existing literature around masculinity, sexuality, incarceration, reentry, and sexual risk behaviors, with input from an experienced qualitative researcher and a staff member at one CBO who had a recent incarceration history. The guide was constructed to be intentionally broad and open-ended to facilitate discussion and exploration of lesser-known topics. Areas for exploration included: (1) life during reentry, (2) life during incarceration, (3) manhood and masculinity and (4) sexual behaviors – both while incarcerated and the first few weeks following their release.

5.4.5 Data Collection and Analysis

Between October 2014 and June 2015 the student investigator conducted 22 interviews with 19 participants at a research facility that conducts community-based HIV prevention research. All participants were verbally consented prior to the start of interviews. Each participant was interviewed at least once and follow-up interviews were conducted with three participants. Follow-up interviews were conducted if interview domains were not addressed during initial interviews (due to time constraints) or if the student investigator deemed it necessary to probe further on particular participant responses. Interview lengths varied, with initial interviews lasting

from about one to two hours, and follow-up interviews lasting from 20 minutes to one hour. All interviews were audio-recorded, and later transcribed by either the student investigator or a professional transcription service. After each interview was completed participants were given a brief demographic survey and were asked if they would be willing to pass on a study referral card to someone they knew who might be interested in participating in the study. This snowball technique was used to expand study recruitment. All participants were given \$25 compensation for their time upon interview completion. Names of participants were replaced with pseudonyms to protect confidentiality.

Using several sampling strategies, the student investigator sought to construct a racially diverse sample of participants. This yielded a sample of 19 black and one white participant. Because race is a critical social construct shaping HIV/STI risk of men and there is not much that can be surmised by the experience of a single individual, this study focuses only on the experiences of the 19 black participants. Transcripts were uploaded to MAXQDA, qualitative analysis software that assists with data organizing, coding, and analysis. Data were analyzed using a combination of deductive and inductive approaches in several phases (Kavanaugh, n.d.). The first phase was data immersion, in which the student investigator read transcripts to identify major organizing ideas. In the second phase the student investigator developed and refined the coding scheme. A priori codes were developed based upon domains described above in the interview guide as well as relevant literature. Upon application of a priori codes to transcript data, emergent themes were identified and incorporated into the coding scheme. The coding scheme was refined using an iterative approach over three separate rounds of coding. The third and fourth phases of analysis were guided by the Constant Comparative Method of Qualitative Analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). This method outlines a systematic approach to categorical analysis of data with the following steps: (1) comparing incidents applicable to each category, (2) integrating categories and their properties (3) delimiting theory, and (4) writing the theory.

A doctoral student with related interests in incarceration and health double coded 10 of the 22 transcripts, and met with the student investigator weekly to discuss and reconcile differences in coding. Consistent with the strategies described by Lincoln and Guba, to insure that the analysis produced credible findings, the second coder assisted in peer debriefing (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Peer debriefing is a process where an investigator works with an unbiased peer who probes the investigators thinking around aspects of the research process. This gave the student investigator the opportunity to: (1) critically analyze findings (2) support the iterative nature of qualitative research by providing the student investigator with the opportunity to articulate and develop emerging hypotheses and impressions of the data, and (3) challenge personal biases.

The study was reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. The National Institute on Allergy and Infectious Diseases issued a Certificate of Confidentiality to further insure protection of participants' confidentiality and protection from subpoena.

5.5 Results

Participants discussed the various ways in which they and other recently released black men obtained sex partners after being released. A minority of men in the sample reported having sex with a committed partner (defined as a girlfriend or spouse) upon release. However, the most salient discussions regarding post-release sex focused on getting sex from previous or new non-transactional casual partners (defined as someone other than a committed partner), transactional partners (women who men described as sex workers) and peer-arranged partners. The various ways men obtained sex influenced their decisions to use condoms in part because the process by which men obtained sex impacted the type of partners they had sex with. In total the decision to use condoms was influenced by the type of sexual partner, desires for enhanced sensation, and the need to satisfy sexual appetite.

5.5.1 How recently released men obtained sex

5.5.1a Arranging sex with non-transactional casual partners

Participants discussed having sex with casual partners, and the different ways they might obtain that sex. They often reported contacting past sex partners after their release in hopes to arrange sexual encounters. When asked to describe how he might set up a sexual encounter with a previous sex partner Richard said:

Well me, I be straight up about it. I just come straight up and ask. Come straight out and ask that person. You know steady sitting round, beatin' 'round the bush knowing what my intentions are. I just put it out on the table. Let her know what my intentions are and it's gonna be yes or it's gonna be no, you know. - *Richard*

Sean, another participant, had a similar approach saying, "There's always homegirls you already been had before you was locked up. They can't wait to see you when you come home anyway." He then goes on to mention women who he associated with in the past who he believed were previously interested in having sex with him and felt would be willing to have sex with him after release. He said:

... I got friends. I got a bunch of homegirls you know...that's attracted to me, don't even care that I got a girl. So I ain't never really had that type of problem. If I get incarcerated and I was with someone and they left me, I come home like I still got homegirls I can reach out to [for sex]. - *Sean*

In addition to arranging sex with previous casual sex partners, several participants talked about seeking out sexual opportunities with new partners. Jason talked about how he might go about finding a woman to have sex with after his release.

I'll just be, like, "Okay. I'm gonna get myself together," and go out and just find a single female, I guess... You can do it that way to where is though you're not paying for it, but it just happens. - *Jason*

Another participant, Irvin, discussed casual sex with a new partner he met through his sister after his release. He said, "...She wasn't nobody to me. Met her through my sister and I just wanted a shot, got a shot at that ... I mean she was wit it, I was wit it, and that's what it was." - *Irvin*

5.5.1b Purchasing sex from transactional partners

It was common for participants to discuss sex with transactional partners. Most often participants reported that they or other recently released men, purchased sex to meet their sexual needs because they did not have committed partners to return home to. Participants mentioned different ways recently released men might obtain transactional sex, but most commonly participants reported that recently released men purchased sex from female exotic dancers who worked in strip clubs in the city's red light district, known as the Block. When asked to discuss how men meet their sexual needs after release one participant, David, said:

Nowadays lotta people pay for pussy, you know. Um, if not that, then they going' out to Baltimore street strip club, but it's one or the other basically, but at the end of the day you still paying for pussy. - *David*

Another participant talked about transactional sex, specifically mentioning it as a way for recently released men without committed partners to have sex. He said:

I mean they wanna have sex. They just gon' fuck anybody you know. Somebody selling pussy, they'll go down on the strip and buy some pussy. I just come home, I'm goin' straight to the strip club. If they don't have that significant other to go home and really wine and dine theyself you know, they'll go down [to the] strip club and buy a girl. - *Will*

Similarly another participant discussed how recently released men would pay for sex upon release if they felt their partner did not remain faithful during the incarceration.

It depends on if your partner did the time wit you and that's where you goin' home at.

Other than that you know every time you come home now they releases you with funds or you know some guys they smart enough when they get they money...they hold on to that, let that build up. Might come home, might have to go buy some. You know go down to the strip club go buy some or however, you know. -*Sean*

The phrase 'did the time' is a colloquialism used by participants to communicate whether or not their partner continued to be faithful during their period of incarceration. A partner who 'did the time' is one who continued to be supportive and did not have sex with other men while her partner was incarcerated. As he explains, if a recently released man's partner did not do the time with him, he would not go home to her. Instead he would seek out transactional sex to meet his sexual needs.

5.5.1c Participating in peer-arranged sexual encounters

Participants described situations in which their friends would arrange sexual encounters for them soon after their release from incarceration. From their accounts it was common for male friends of recently released men to secure opportunities for men to have sex, and was often a way to show their support and welcome home their recently released friend. The following participant, David, shared his first sexual experience after release, which was orchestrated by his friends. He was asked to share his perceptions regarding whether or not this was a common practice and its importance.

I: Do you think its common for people's friends...to organize women to have sex with?

Do you feel like that's common?

P: It's real common, yeah. Mm hmm

I: OK, why do you think that is?

P: Because it's like, it's a guy thing, it's like.... It's one thing like I come visit you, I send you mail, I put something in your book [provide him with money to spend while incarcerated], but like you're here now. You know, it's like it's a brotherhood thing...like [a] welcome back. - *David*

Marcus described a similar experience where his friend arranged a sexual encounter for him. While he describes this practice as an actionable way for his peers to show support, he also describes it as a practical gesture that afforded him the opportunity to have sex despite having limited remaining social ties to his community.

It's a homeboy thing, it's a around the way thing, you know what I'm saying. Your peoples just came home - you know - I'm a find a girl for you to knock down. You aint comin' home to nobody - you know what I'm saying - I got you. I got some freaks or whatever that you can just go ahead and knock down and do what you gotta do with it ,or whatever. That's really just what that is, that's just some around the way homeboy type stuff... But you know somebody been locked up for a while and I'm comin' to Maryland and the only people that I know out here is people I'm related to. So I don't really just got somebody like 'Yo I'm home,' you know just go knock on somebodies door that I already knew...[I] been gone for like 10 years or any amount of time, you been gone for a while - you know. You tryin' to get on it, tryin' to get laid.... -*Marcus*

He also described the women involved in these particular arrangements. He referred to the women as 'hoodrats' (a term which commonly refers to an unkempt sexually permissive woman) and intimated that sometimes the sex was paid for. He said:

Yeah but they're not always prostitutes. Sometimes it's just around... sometimes its just girls that you know that are easy, that's really all it is. You know, hoodrats. That's really

usually who it is. Usually just hood rats from around the way, they don't have much goin' on. This is what they do all the time anyway - you know. They don't really have lives, or they just like to have sex. - *Marcus*

Another participant was asked to describe the ways in which a recently released man might satisfy his sexual needs. In the exchange below he describes a peer-arranged sexual encounter as one way to satisfy his need. He referred to the woman involved as a 'thot,' another term used to refer to a sexually permissive woman.

He might know a person that that loves sex or a female that you know would do anything for him or love sex. And he would basically set it up [and say] 'You know my boy home today, he tryin' to... you know.'...Or he might pay for it [and say] 'I got you, I'm a buy...' It's probably a girl who does it all the time or is attached to his homeboy, and will do whatever his homeboy say. But the homeboy doesn't really see her as a spouse or someone he wanna be with, he just lendin' her out. Basically think she's a thot... - *Jamal*

5.5.2 Factors Influencing Condom Use

Participants reported various ways they attained sex following release. As a part of that discussion, participants talked about their attitudes and beliefs regarding condom use. Participants shared their perceptions regarding why they would choose to use condoms in some scenarios and forgo condom use in others. They also shared their perceptions about reasons other recently released men would use or not use condoms. The type of sexual partner, desires for enhanced sensation, and the need to satisfy sexual appetite were discussed as important factors influencing condom use.

Transactional sex was commonly discussed among the men sampled. As such they were asked how they decided whether or not they would use protection when paying for sex. Men who reported engaging in transactional sex stated that they always used protection because of fear of

contracting HIV or other sexually transmitted infections, or they were unaware of the number of sex partners the female sex worker had, or whether or not they consistently used condoms with their customers. For example one participant said:

Uh... doing that [transactional sex] you gotta use protection. 'Cause you don't know what they doing. So you gotta use protection. If a female come at you, you know, and no protection, and she just want to do what she do and get out of there, yeah, you gotta use protection with her. 'Cause you don't know how many guys pay her and she just let them do it to her without a condom. So yeah, that's the number one thing, though. If you...first off, if you buying, you know, you should use protection. -*Jason*

Participants were also asked to describe situations in which they would not use a condom when having sex shortly after release. Most participants stated that they would not use condoms if they were having sex with their 'wife' or 'girl', who they considered as a committed partner, upon release or if they knew their partner well enough. For example, one participant said that a recently released man would not use a condom "... If he was comin' home to his wife or somebody like his girl, that's been his girl like for the longest time or whatever." -*Marcus*

Other participants said it was common for recently released men to desire to impregnate a woman upon release and would have unprotected sex to that end. A participant was asked to talk further about this desire, and he believed it was common and perhaps in part used as an excuse to have unprotected sex. In the exchange below he said:

P: Yeah you hear that a lot when you're incarcerated. 'Man I'm a go home and I'm a impregnate...' Yeah you hear that a lot.

I: Why do you think that is?

P: I don't know why, people have different reasons, maybe they been wanted to impregnate that certain female, or they wanna be a father or they don't wanna use

protection and they might not wanna pull out because it been so long. So you never know.

-*Jamal*

Though many participants ascribed to using a condom when paying for sex, and choosing not to if they were having sex with a committed partner, they discussed why it might be challenging for a recently released man to use protection during sex regardless of who he might be having sex with. One participant indicated that recently released men might associate forgoing condom use with celebrating new freedom. He said, "It's the mind thing of freedom. Like I'm not gonna restrain myself I was already [restrained]..." -*Kenny* Men also reported not wanting to use condoms during post-release sex because they wanted to avoid reduced sensation, particularly after abstaining from sex for lengthy periods. One participant said:

...Who wants to? It's like who wanna have protected sex when they first come home?

They wanna feel those muscles and that, you know, and them secretions you know what I mean. They wanna feel that, not saying that you don't feel it with the condom on, but you know it's a different feeling. - *Will*

Another participant echoed a similar perception describing why having abstained from sex for long periods would increase your desires to have unprotected sex.

P: ...Cuz like they want the feeling, because like your hand can only do but so much.

And you just want the real deal. You want the ...everything that come with it. You just... you want it...

I: So, why is it so important for someone who's coming home, this person that you described? Why would it be so important for them to feel everything?

P: Cuz it's been so long, it's like you forgot what it feel like you know

- *David*

Another participant talked about how a recently released man would choose to have unprotected sex with a sex worker because of increased sexual desire after long periods of abstinence. When asked to describe a situation in which a recently released man would choose not to use a condom he said:

Like, it'd be sometimes, like, I guess if he pays for it, and she don't got one... but she want the money and he want the nut. So they'll do it...He really want the nut and she really want the money. - *Jason*

5.6 Discussion

Existing research indicates that recently released men are more likely to engage in high-risk sexual activity compared to men without a recent history of incarceration (Epperson et al., 2010; Khan et al., 2009; Khan, Wohl, et al., 2008). What is missing from prior studies is an understanding of the context of these sexual encounters, the people with whom they have sex and how the encounters are established. The present qualitative study details recently released black men's experiences obtaining sex and the factors they describe as influencing whether or not they decided to use condoms with their sex partners. Findings from this study contribute to an emerging body of literature focused on understanding how social contextual factors impact HIV/STI risk behaviors in populations under the supervision of the criminal justice system.

Consistent with findings from previous research (Khan, Wohl, et al., 2008), study participants reported that recently released men often obtained sex by purchasing it from female sex workers (FSWs), specifically from exotic dancers working in strip clubs. Participants appeared to believe that transactional sex provided a convenient way to satisfy their desires for sex, particularly for those who did not have a committed partner. Because incarceration is often associated with relationship conflict (Khan, Behrend, et al., 2011), disruption of social ties (Draine & Wolff, 1998) and changes to sexual networks (Dauria, Elifson, et al., 2015; Dauria, Oakley, et al., 2015),

it is unsurprising that recently released men would choose to purchase sex upon release. Having been displaced from their communities and sexual networks might make them more vulnerable to accessing convenient, high-risk sex partners.

Though there are few studies that characterize the HIV/STI risk for clients of FSW, emerging work has examined the sex and drug-related risk behaviors of female exotic dancers in Baltimore, USA who participate in transactional sex (Reuben, Serio-Chapman, Welsh, Matens, & Sherman, 2011; Sherman, Lileston, & Reuben, 2012). Findings from this work indicate high levels of injection drug use and inconsistent condom use among the women, both of which promote the transmission of HIV and other STIs (Reuben et al., 2011). Given the level of HIV/STI risk associated with transactional sex in strip clubs, findings from this study suggest that transactional sex may be an important pathway for transmission of HIV/STIs among recently released black men living in Baltimore.

In addition to purchasing sex, many participants described scenarios in which recently released men had sexual encounters with women, previously arranged by their peers. It was considered a “tradition” and was often a way for peers to acknowledge and celebrate the homecoming of their friends, but may have also given recently released men a chance to reify or reestablish their social networks with their peers. For men who had been incarcerated for longer periods and were more socially disconnected from their communities, this might also be interpreted as a practical gesture, affording them opportunities to have sex soon after release. Participants assigned particular typologies to the women who participated in these encounters and primarily described them as sexually permissive, having multiple sexual partners, and were sometimes paid to have sex. Based on these findings, recently released men who are participating in these sexual encounters may be interfacing with sexual networks that are particularly high-risk, thus increasing their risk for HIV/STIs. However, the language and terms participants used to describe women in these

encounters potentially add complexity to HIV/STI risk for the men and the women they are having the sex with.

Participants used derogatory language to describe women who were involved in peer arranged sexual encounters. Men labeled the women with whom they had sex sexually permissive using terms such as ‘thots’ and ‘hoodrats’ whom, in some instances, their male friends were lending out for their sexual pleasure immediately after release. This verbal denigration may be indicative of differences in gender power in some sexual partnerships between low-income black men and women and culturally defined gendered behaviors where it is acceptable for women to be treated as ‘sexual objects’ (Anderson, 1999). Gender has been identified as an important social factor that can shape vulnerability to HIV and other sexually transmitted infections (Gupta, 2000). Women who are disempowered in their sexual interactions with men, particularly women who may be exchanging sex for money, might be less likely to negotiate condom use (Pulerwitz, Amaro, Jong, Gortmaker, & Rudd, 2010; Wingood & Diclemente, 2000). This changes their HIV/STI risk, but it also changes risk for recently released men with whom they are sexually engaged. Important directions for subsequent work should determine the nature of these arranged sexual partnerships, and the extent to which these women engage in transactional sex and participate in these encounters in order to more completely evaluate recently released men’s risk for HIV.

Participants discussed their perceptions regarding condom use when having sex after release. During transactional sex, participants reported that recently released men should always use condoms because they could not verify how consistently FSW were using condoms with their other clients. However, participants reported that they themselves and other recently released men rarely used condoms if they were having sex with their committed partner. These findings suggest that participants perceived committed partners as low-risk, and are unlikely to use condoms during sex. This is consistent with prior research that suggests recently released men are more likely to use condoms with non-committed partners compared to committed partners (Morrow et

al., 2007). Importantly though, this perception of reduced sexual risk is inconsistent with what we know about the negative impacts of incarceration on long-term partnerships. Women whose male partners become incarcerated sometimes become involved in high-risk sexual partnerships to garner financial support or to fulfill needs for physical intimacy. Moreover, while incarcerated, men may engage in unprotected same-sex sexual behavior (Dauria, Elifson, et al., 2015; Gorbach, Stoner, & Aral, 2002; Khan, Behrend, et al., 2011). Indeed, at least some of the sexual events between recently released men and their committed partners are high-risk. In general participants reported intentions to use condoms, particularly in what they believed might be high-risk situations, but admitted that it was challenging to do so because of strong want for sex or the desire to feel greater sensation after long periods of sexual abstinence – powerful motivators to engage in unprotected sex. These barriers to condom use are important, particularly among populations engaging in high-risk sexual behavior; condoms greatly reduce transmission and acquisition of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections (Holmes, Levine, & Weaver, 2004; Weller & Davis-Beaty, 2002)

The sexual risk behaviors reported by men in this study should be interpreted with a particular social and economic context. Incarceration among young black men in Baltimore City is very common. One in five of Baltimore's black men between the ages of 20 and 30 are incarcerated (Lotke & Ziedenberg, 2005). Because of under resourced schools, sub optimal housing, and limited employment opportunities, many young black men in Baltimore will become incarcerated; this increases their risk for HIV/STIs as well as the risk of their sex partners (Epperson et al., 2010; Khan, Wohl, et al., 2008; Ricks et al., 2015; Thomas, Levandowski, Isler, Torrone, & Wilson, 2008). And, due to patterns in incarceration this change in recently released men's risk of HIV/STIs is not necessarily isolated to one post-release period. Increasingly limited employment opportunities, due to employment discrimination, paired with the burden of financial obligations means that many of these young men will return to illegal financial pursuits and

become incarcerated again. So, the patterns of risk behaviors illuminated by the findings in this study are not temporally limited, rather they are cyclical. In predominately black communities with high rates of male incarceration, the sexual behaviors of recently released black men may be an important driver of HIV/STI transmission.

5.7 Limitations

The findings presented for this research must be interpreted within the context of the study's limitations. First, although understanding men's accounts of the strategies and pathways recently released men use to obtain sex provides powerful insight into social and contextual elements of post-release sexual partnering, our ability to completely describe their HIV/STI risk is limited. This study was not designed to capture the perspectives of women who have had sex with recently released men, but in order to more comprehensively describe how social context impacts recently released men's HIV/STI risk and contributes to HIV/STI disparities among blacks, the experiences of women who have had sex with recently released men must be explored.

Second, the sample for this study was recruited primarily from Baltimore CBO's providing services to recently released men, thus most of the sample had some level of engagement with community resources, though that level of engagement varied. According to a study that explored the experiences of inmates returning to Baltimore City after being released, about half of the respondents reported using some community services upon release (Visher et al., 2004). So about half of those citizens returning to Baltimore were not engaged with community resources. This study does not capture the experiences of those men. Men not connected with community resources may have increased levels of life instability and might be more likely to engage in high-risk behaviors.

This study also had a number of strengths. Due to the variation in age, relationship status and length of incarceration this study was able to capture a broad range of perspectives and

experiences – strengthening the transferability of the findings. Additionally, by employing an inductive approach the study was able to identify important potential contributors to sexual risk behaviors of recently released black men living in Baltimore City.

5.8 Conclusions

This study adds to an emerging body of literature examining how the sexual risk behaviors of recently released black men can impact the transmission of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections. In this study recently released men's accounts of how they obtain sex and how they make decisions about condom use illuminate important implications regarding their HIV/STI risk perceptions and how being recently released influences their interactions with high-risk sexual networks. In order to fully contextualize recently released men's sexual HIV risk subsequent work should focus on understanding the risk behaviors and perceptions of high-risk sexual partners they interface with upon release.

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Chapter 6: Manuscript 2 – Recently released black men’s perceptions of incarceration’s impact on the dynamics of sexual partnering

6.1 Abstract

Evidence suggests that men with recent histories of incarceration are more likely to engage in high-risk sexual activity, however there is limited research exploring how having been recently released might impact men’s sexual risk behaviors or the dynamics of sexual partnering. This qualitative study explores the ways in which exposure to incarceration impacts the dynamics of sexual partnering among recently released black men in Baltimore City. In-depth interviews were conducted with 19 recently released men living in Baltimore, Maryland. Domains of exploration included: manhood, sexuality, and sexual behavior related to their experiences behind bars, and since their release. Data were analyzed using a combination of inductive and deductive approaches. Participants believed that women living in the neighborhoods to which they returned found recently released men to be highly desirable sexual partners because they offered increased potential for sexual gratification, were perceived as healthier than other eligible sexual partners in their communities, represented opportunities for attaining financial stability, and the potential for establishing lasting romantic partnerships. As a result men believed they had more opportunities for sex and more power to negotiate sex with women. Recently released black men’s perceptions of their own sexual desirability among women illuminate important implications regarding the custody of power in the sexual relationships of recently released men which may increase HIV/STI risk for recently released men and their sex partners.

6.2 Introduction

Black males are incarcerated more than any other demographic group in the US. In 2014 they accounted for more than 30% of all incarcerated men, with rates of incarceration nearly 6 times that of white males (E. Carson, 2015). One under-examined consequence of high rates of incarceration within certain communities is that this can be a strong social force which can alter sexual networks and sexual risk for community members (Aral et al., 2008).

Because black men are incarcerated at rates more than 20 times that of black women, the number of men available for sexual partnering can be dramatically reduced in addition to the already existing lack of available men due to violent crime and early mortality (Adaora a Adimora & Schoenbach, 2002; E. Carson, 2015; Geronimus et al., 1996; Majors & Billson, 1992). A low sex ratio, the number of males for each female in a population, increases concurrent sexual partnerships, which accelerates the spread of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections (STI) (Potterat et al., 1999; Rosenberg et al., 1999). Incarceration also contributes to dissolution of existing sexual partnerships by physically separating men and women from their partners. Subsequently, women whose partners become incarcerated may become involved in high-risk sexual partnerships to attain financial support, or fulfill their needs for physical and emotional intimacy (Dauria, Elifson, Arriola, Wingood, & Cooper, 2015; Khan et al., 2011).

While high rates of incarceration can change the size and composition of sexual networks in ways that increase the spread of HIV/AIDS and other STI's, the subsequent release of incarcerated men can have equally important impacts on the sexual health of communities. Each year, thousands of black men are released from jails and prisons. The time period in which men are reintegrating into their communities, after being released from correctional facilities, poses considerable risk for engaging in HIV/STI risk behaviors (Epperson et al., 2010; Khan et al., 2009; Khan, Wohl, et al., 2008; Morrow et al., 2007). Evidence suggests that men with recent histories of incarceration are more likely than men without that history to engage in high-risk sexual activity (Epperson et

al., 2010; Khan et al., 2009; Khan, Wohl, et al., 2008). Because communities burdened by high rates of incarceration are often also affected by HIV/AIDS, understanding how having a recent history of incarceration impacts the sexual relationships of recently released black men is of particular importance to HIV prevention.

Several quantitative studies have established an association between incarceration history and high-risk sexual behavior among men (e.g. concurrency, multiple partners, unprotected vaginal sex) (Khan et al., 2008, 2009; Knittel, Snow, Griffith, & Morenoff, 2013; Rogers et al., 2012). At least two studies have identified a temporal relationship between incarceration and risky sexual behavior, suggesting elevated rates of high-risk sexual behaviors after release from incarceration (Khan, Miller, et al., 2008; Morrow et al., 2007). And, there is some evidence to suggest that incarceration may contribute uniquely to sexual risk behaviors occurring after release (Epperson et al., 2010). Both qualitative and quantitative research suggest that incarceration can promote partner concurrency and multiple partnership by causing a shortage of men (Dauria, Elifson, et al., 2015; Dauria, Oakley, et al., 2015; Thomas et al., 2008), but there has been limited research exploring how having been recently released might impact men's sexual risk behaviors or the dynamics of sexual partnering (defined as their perceived ability to negotiate sex, perceived desirability, factors influencing sexual partnering) in the communities to which they return. Further research is needed to begin contextualizing HIV/STI sexual risk behaviors among recently released black men.

The purpose of this study is to explore the social-contextual factors that may be relevant to sexual risk behaviors of recently released black men, and examine the ways in which they understand how a recent history of incarceration impacts the dynamics of sexual partnering after release.

This study has two main objectives: (1) To explore the social-contextual factors that may be relevant to sexual risk behaviors of black men who have recently returned to their communities

following release from prison/jail and (2) To explore the ways in which exposure to incarceration impacts the dynamics of sexual partnering between recently released black men and their partners once they return home.

6.3 Study context

Baltimore is a city of predominately black residents (63.1%), many of who are living in under-resourced communities profoundly impacted by incarceration (US Census Bureau, 2015; Justice Policy Institute, 2015; Walsh, 2010). With an incarceration rate nearly three times higher than the national average, in 2010 nearly 8000 of Baltimore city's 622,793 residents were incarcerated in Maryland State facilities (Justice Policy Institute, 2015). Because incarceration is often a symptom of broader systematic shortcomings, many of the communities in Baltimore with the highest incarceration rates are extraordinarily challenged by addiction, housing issues, violent crime, poor educational attainment, and limited opportunities for employment (Justice Policy Institute, 2015). All of the men in this study were recruited from these disadvantaged communities in Baltimore City.

6.4 Methods

6.4.1 Participants

Nineteen black men released from prison or jail within the past 12 months were enrolled in the present study. The average age was 33 years ($SD = 6.4$). The average length of time since release was 3.8 months and the average length of time incarcerated was 50 months, or about 4 years. The majority of participants ($n=18$) had been incarcerated more than once, with an average of six lifetime incarcerations. All participants report a history of involvement in drug-related crime. One participant self-identified as homosexual, and all others self-identified as heterosexual. Nine participants indicated that they were in a relationship (defined as either married or having a girlfriend/boyfriend) and all others were single.

6.4.2 Recruitment

Study participants were recruited using three different methods: passive and active recruitment from Baltimore community based organizations (CBOs) that provide services for recently released men, recruitment from participants of HIV prevention studies conducted at a community-based research facility, and snowball sampling. Fourteen participants were recruited from CBOs, four were recruited through snowball sampling, and the final participant was recruited from an HIV prevention study. Because participants were primarily recruited from Baltimore CBOs, most participants were engaged with community services at the time of enrollment. Participants were receiving a variety of resources and support including interpersonal skill development, job readiness services, educational equivalency programs, case management, substance abuse treatment, and vocational training to facilitate successful reintegration into society and their communities.

6.4.3 Screening and Eligibility

Prospective participants were screened for eligibility, by phone or in person using the following inclusion criteria: male sex, age between 21-40 years, and a history of incarceration in which they were either (1) released in the last 12 months after serving at least one consecutive year in either a prison (state or federal) or jail or (2) released within the last 12 months after serving 2 or more consecutive months in either a prison (state or federal) or jail and have been released in the past 3 years after serving at least one consecutive year. The criterion for the present study was chosen to enroll men who had both significant (based upon length of time) and recent incarceration experiences, consistent with relevant literature.

6.4.4 Interview Instrument

A semi-structured interview instrument guide was developed using existing literature around masculinity, sexuality, incarceration, reentry, and sexual risk behaviors, with input from an experienced qualitative researcher and a staff member at one CBO who had a recent incarceration

history. The guide was constructed to be intentionally broad and open-ended to facilitate discussion and exploration of lesser-known topics. Areas for exploration included: (1) life during reentry, (2) life during incarceration, (3) manhood and masculinity and (4) sexual behaviors – both while incarcerated and the first few weeks following their release.

6.4.5 Data Collection and Analysis

Between October 2014 and June 2015 the student investigator conducted 22 interviews with 19 participants at a research facility that conducts community-based HIV prevention research. All participants were verbally consented prior to the start of interviews. Each participant was interviewed at least once and follow-up interviews were conducted with three participants. Follow-up interviews were conducted if interview domains were not addressed during initial interviews (due to time constraints) or if the student investigator deemed it necessary to probe further on particular participant responses. Interview lengths varied, with initial interviews lasting from about one to two hours, and follow-up interviews lasting from 20 minutes to one hour. All interviews were audio-recorded, and later transcribed by either the student investigator or a professional transcription service. After each interview was completed participants were given a brief demographic survey and were asked if they would be willing to pass on a study referral card to someone they knew who might be interested in participating in the study. This snowball technique was used to expand study recruitment. All participants were given \$25 compensation for their time upon interview completion. Names of participants were replaced with pseudonyms to protect confidentiality.

Using several sampling strategies, the student investigator sought to construct a racially diverse sample of participants. This yielded a sample of 19 black participants and one white participant. Because race is a critical social construct shaping HIV/STI risk of men and there is not much that can be surmised by the experience of a single individual, this study focuses only on the experiences of the 19 black participants. Transcripts were uploaded to MAXQDA, qualitative

analysis software that assists with data organizing, coding, and analysis. Data were analyzed using a combination of deductive and inductive approaches in several phases (Kavanaugh, n.d.). The first phase was data immersion, in which the student investigator read transcripts to identify major organizing ideas. In the second phase the student investigator developed and refined the coding scheme. A priori codes were developed based upon domains described above in the interview guide as well as relevant literature. Upon application of a priori codes to transcript data, emergent themes were identified and incorporated into the coding scheme. The coding scheme was refined using an iterative approach over three separate rounds of coding. The third and fourth phases of analysis were guided by the Constant Comparative Method of Qualitative Analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). This method outlines a systematic approach to categorical analysis of data with the following steps: (1) comparing incidents applicable to each category, (2) integrating categories and their properties (3) delimiting theory, and (4) writing the theory.

A doctoral student with related interests in incarceration and health double coded 10 of the 22 transcripts, and met with the student investigator weekly to discuss and reconcile differences in coding. Consistent with the strategies described by Lincoln and Guba, to insure that the analysis produced credible findings, the second coder assisted in peer debriefing (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Peer debriefing is a process where an investigator works with an unbiased peer who probes the investigators thinking around aspects of the research process. This gave the student investigator the opportunity to: (1) critically analyze findings (2) support the iterative nature of qualitative research by providing the student investigator with the opportunity to articulate and develop emerging hypotheses and impressions of the data, and (3) challenge personal biases.

The study was reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. The National Institute on Allergy and Infectious Diseases

issued a Certificate of Confidentiality to further insure protection of participants' confidentiality and protection from subpoena.

6.5 Results

Participants discussed recently released men's experiences with establishing sexual relationships and finding sexual partners after being released from correctional facilities. Participants presented a belief that women living in the neighborhoods to which they returned found recently released men to be highly desirable sexual partners and discussed various reasons in support of their beliefs. Those reasons included: increased potential for sexual gratification, the belief that women perceived recently released men as healthier than other eligible sexual partners in their communities, opportunities for financial stability, and the potential for establishing lasting romantic partnerships. Common throughout the discussions of each of these themes were participants' beliefs that women not only found recently released men to be highly desirable sexual partners, and also that it was easy to negotiate sex with women simply because the men had been recently released. In some cases they believed this status would attract women to them for sex.

6.5.1 Recently released men are healthier

Most participants articulated that women living in their neighborhoods and communities perceived recently released men as healthy. Furthermore, some participants believed that recently released men were perceived to be healthier than men currently living in their neighborhoods, and communities, thus making them more highly desired sexual partners over men who had not been recently released. Participants described health in terms of physical fitness, abstaining from substance use, and not having sexually transmitted infections.

6.5.1a Physical Fitness

Some participants described health in terms of physical fitness, alluding to the fact that men often spent time improving their physiques while incarcerated and this is something they believed women responded to favorably. For example one participant, David, said:

I: ...Is it common for women in the neighborhood that you're from to be attracted to men who've come home?

P: Yeah! If you see, alright, lets see you see one of your homeboys you haven't seen him in a long time, [they would say] 'You look different, you look like an action figure....'
He all oily, skin all good, cuz you aint been outside really that much. [A woman would say] "I didn't want to talk to you back then, but I don't know. I might need some of that, I don't know"

- *David*

Will, another, participant echoed similar beliefs, making specific references to physical fitness and being healthy. He said:

...Some cases you be like, 'Girl he been locked up all that time, you know. Oh he healthy,' this that and the third - you know. 'He lookin' bright, got his muscles, he clean.'
You understand what I'm saying?

- *Will*

6.5.1b Abstinence from street drugs

It was not uncommon for participants to associate the perceived healthiness of recently released men with abstinence from street drugs. Derrick talked about how women considered recently released men to be 'fresh.' He said:

You haven't been on the street in 12 years, and you return Monument Street - where you from - they be like, 'What! You fresh.' You got a better chance then the guys who's abusing Percocets. His lips all dry. You look better to her then he do, the guy who shootin'

heroin. ...She don't have nothing against them, they're just not her type. She's not gonna go after him. You just come home clean, you aint got no tracks in your arm, you got some nice tattoo work, you got a head on your shoulder. You clean and sober...

- *Derrick*

Some participants believed that recently released men had a glow or exuded an aura that was associated with a status of health. When John was asked why he believed women 'flocked' to or were attracted to him after his release, he discussed this perception of health while also making references to drug use.

I: What do you think it is about you just recently getting out that makes people flock to you?

P: I think it's the glow. I don't know the glow, I think that's what it is. I never really asked nobody that question before.

I: When you say a 'glow,' what do you mean by that?

P: Like you look healthy basically, you look more healthy. These dudes out here they do nothing but poppin' pills. They don't want that, if you want a woman yeah, they don't want those dudes out here doin' drugs

- *John*

6.5.1c Free of Sexually Transmitted Infections

Participants often cited that recently released men were believed to have abstained from sex with other women during their incarceration as one of the reasons why women considered them to be highly desirable sexual partners. For some participants that was one of the reasons why they believed recently released men were considered healthy. One participant, Will, shared his perception that some women believe that having been recently released also meant that you were less likely to be high risk. He describes his understandings of why women are more attracted to recently released men, and what he meant by high risk below:

P: ...It's like a glow, women like that because like they been around all these niggas that's been out here already and at high risk. Not saying that you not in high risk inside of prison too..

I: High risk in what way?

P: Carrying STDs and stuff like that. And some women lookin' like 'Girl he just came home I don't think he got nothing...' - *Will*

Though most participants who talked about the perceptions of the health of recently released men did so indicating that women believed they were healthier, several participants alluded to the stigma around same sex sexual behavior in prisons and jails and how that may lead women to be weary of having sex with recently released men. For example Will followed up his statement about high risk with the following:

... Then you have your women that say 'Shit girl, I heard he been fucking them faggies over there.' You understand what I'm saying?

- *Will*

Another participant, Marcus, echoed a similar belief linking the stigma of same-sex sexual behavior behind bars with HIV/AIDS risk. He said:

...Sometimes it is [difficult to convince a woman to have sex] because there's that stigma that everybody goes to prison and have sex with dudes and catch AIDS and all that. And that's not really the case for real, I mean IT HAPPENS IT HAPPENS it's a reality.

They're not wrong for seeing that or believing it because it does happen...I don't knock them for being leery about that, at all I don't, cuz I used to see guys that was in there that was on that type of time and they was going on to females.

- *Marcus*

6.5.2 Greater Sexual Attraction

Most participants believed that recently released men are perceived as renewed, or rejuvenated. Participants often described themselves as having a particular aura or glow that women were particularly responsive to. In fact, many participants believed that women could tell simply by looking at them that they were recently released. Irvin stated that women were aware if you had been recently released and that increased their desires to have sex with recently released men.

Well lot a times women, they can see that glow on you and they be like ‘You just got out of jail didn’t you?’ Like yeah, and they’ll push up on you because they feel like they wanna be the first to get it. You know like it’s like a feminine thing with them, like a female conquest to them. Like [they will say I will] ‘Put a whoopin’ on this nigga,’ and blah blah blah...

- *Irvin*

David, another participant, shared a similar belief about how being recently incarcerated was renewing or rejuvenating. He also believed that women responded to this idea, and were more sexually attracted to him, saying ‘I can bite you,’ which for him is a phrase that indicates a sexual attraction. When asked to expound on why he believed women found him more sexually desirable he said:

I: And so they want to have sex with you?

P: Yeah

I: Why?

P: It’s like uh... I don’t know... its like uh boy I can bite you type look, its something different about it. It’s like the chemistry, it’s like... I don’t know I can’t explain this. Like seeing a pink Cadillac outside you like ‘Yeah I’m about to go drive that, that’s my car.’ It used to be burgundy, but now it’s shiny and pink. You like ‘okay’ and now you got eyelashes on the car now too, oh ok.

- *David*

6.5.2a Potential for Greater Sexual Gratification

Discussions arose, often unprompted, about participants' perceptions about why women in their communities might find them to be desirable sexual partners. Participants articulated the belief that woman associated recently released men with the opportunity for good sex. For example Derrick said:

I think that coming home is like... like its girls out here that target men that's just coming home. Like [they say] 'I'm a get me some of that good [sex] when he come home.'

- *Derrick*

Participants elaborated on these discussions, indicating their belief that women made this association based on the assumption that men had abstained from sex while incarcerated. As a result they would have enhanced sexual gratification should they engage in sexually activity with recently released men. Will stated:

I mean yeah it's like they know. Women attracted to men that's just coming home because first of all, you haven't been with a woman in years. So it's like women like 'Damn he aint been with a woman in years, girl he gone tear [this up], he gone do this and it's gon' be so good.' You understand what I'm saying...

-*Will*

Other participants echoed similar thoughts, but also talked about how the frustrations and unresolved emotions associated with a recent incarceration, to some women, would enhance the potential for sexual satisfaction, suggesting that sex would be more fulfilling or intense. Marcus suggested that these perceptions made it easier to negotiate sex, intimating that it did not require much convincing to get a woman or a 'hoodrat' (a term often used to refer to an unkempt sexually permissive woman) to agree to have sex with a recently released man.

A lot a girls know when a guy first comes home he got a lot to get off his chest so they know they gonna get it. So they easily jump on board whether they a hood rat or not or you know what I'm saying, sometimes they just know that they 'bout to get it really good, cuz he's just now comin' home. So you know a lot of times its not really much to convince a girl

- *Marcus*

Another participant, Martin, shared similar beliefs, also indicating a belief that woman yearned for or highly desired sex with a recently released man, and would be willing to wait for it.

So that's how it be, a lot of people will look at it as 'Oh he got a lot of build up, frustration, been locked up for so long, I know it's gonna be *good*.' So forth and so on. It's funny but that's the truth, but they just wait for it.

- *Martin*

6.5.3 Opportunities for establishing financial security

Participants articulated that recently released men were desirable sexual partners in part because, after having sex with them, woman would receive financial support. Some participants reported that women were particularly motivated to have sex with recently released men who where involved in drug trade prior to becoming incarcerated, based on the assumption that these men would return to drug trade and earn considerable money. One participant, Sean, said:

...If she broke, and she ready to come runnin' to you, 9 times out of 10 she comin' runnin' to you because she already knew what you was about before you got locked up. 'Oh yeah he getting ready to come home and sell drugs have some more money. Let me go head and give him some,' or something like that.

- *Sean*

Another participant, Richard, intimated similar beliefs when asked why he thought women 'flocked' to men who had been recently released from prison or jail.

P: I came home, like females they like flock to you. Like they found out I was home and just came around.

I: Why do you think that is that they “flock” to you?

P: Cause they know before I got locked up I was getting nice little bit of money so they figure, ok, ‘He bought to start getting money again.’ Yeah so they, you know, money chasin’ basically. - Richard

Marcus stated that he believed women used sex as a way to secure financial benefits or support from recently released men who they thought were particularly successful in drug trade prior to their incarceration.

P: Lot a times girls use that [sex] to reel a dude in.

I: And when you say reel them in, what are they hoping to get?

P: Hopin’ that he jump back out there in the streets... ‘Specially like I said if he was somebody that was a *somebody* before he left, in the street. He was a drug dealer that got a lot a money out there then yeah, she wanna go cuz she think he bout to go back to that. Cuz a lot a times dudes do. Lot a guys go right back to it... Lot a girls look at it like ‘He bout to come out here and get that money girl, I’m bout to boom, you know what I mean.’ Shopping sprees this that and the third... - Marcus

6.5.4 Opportunities for romantic partnership

Closely related to ideas of garnering financial security from recently released men were participants’ beliefs that women saw recently released men as an opportunity for romantic partnership, based on the assumption that these men are often single or unattached upon release. Derrick said:

I: So you said that it’s trendy and that there are women that target [recently released men]. Why do you think they do that?

P: ...You know if you just did that many years and I'm single, you know a woman is gonna want to be with me if I'm her type, if she feel like we can go somewhere, and we can build something together. - Derrick

Some participants discuss the complexities associated with sexual partnership with recently released men in the community, intimating that women competed against one another for the opportunity to have highly satisfying sexual encounters, as discussed earlier, but also to establish romantic relationships. For example Marcus said:

Some girls they flat out just like sex, or liked you anyway. If they knew you before you went in and they [say] 'Oh ok he aint wit that BITCH no more I'm a go head and get on that' ...Cuz they say, the way the story goes is the first girl you have sex with when you come home, you end up fallin' in love with the pussy - Marcus

Marcus went on to further explain this particular strategy he believed women used. He explained that recently released men had not had the opportunity to have sex with women for extended periods of times, so women who were skilled at sex had the opportunity to secure a relationship. He said:

It's not all the time, but sometimes a girl just want a man. So getting a dude that just came home from prison-- you give it to him, you give it to him good and he aint had none in a while and you doin' this for him and all that. Now she got a man. She doesn't really care if he brings anything to the table. In a lot of cases she just want a man because in her mind she can probably mold him into whatever she want him to be.

Will also articulated that women who were particularly skilled at sex would be able to keep a recently released man's interest, and also secure financial and relationship stability. He said:

P: ...So women definitely are attracted to the guys that just comin' home you know, tryin

to give you some of that good [sex] think it's gone get you. 'Girl I'm a put this mother fuckin' on him and he gone call every night.' I mean I don't know, like I said I guess that's *probably* why you studying it because you don't know. But yeah it goes down like that.

I: So what are they getting out of it outside of sexual pleasure? Is there anything else?

P: Men?

I: No the women. What are they getting out of it besides that?

P: I mean if you can get anything, you can get something, or you can get nothing. It varies, you can just get a orgasm you know, but some women aint really tryin' to accept that, because they can go home and give they own self a orgasm. So its like 'Girl he fuck the shit out of me you know he got a good job, he makin' this money, pay my bills' stuff like that. And like I say women you know sometimes they get stability and they get, you know, they get a good man.

- Will

Irvin discussed how recently released men were often deceptive in their interactions with women immediately after their release. He articulated that women thought they would be able to use sex to vie for men's affection and secure romantic partnerships. However, some recently released men had no intentions on being in a committed relationship of any kind. Irvin reported being dishonest with women about relationship intentions. He said:

P: Lotta times it [interactions between a recently released man and a woman] work like this. Okay you give it to me and we fine, we cool, but I'm a still come hit it when I want it, and she gone be satisfied wit it cuz I just got out of jail so she gone think that I'm hitin' this and hitin' that and hitin' yeah, cuz were never honest with her because of the way she came at it and just gave it up to me. I aint gone be honest with her, for what you know?

I: So you're saying that men will also be with other women besides that person [who was pursuing him].

6.6 Discussion

Recent research shows that men who have been recently released from correctional facilities are more likely to engage in high-risk sexual behaviors (Epperson et al., 2010; Khan et al., 2009; Khan, Wohl, et al., 2008; Morrow et al., 2007). Subsequently the communities to which they return are at increased risk for HIV and other STIs (Rogers et al., 2012; Thomas et al., 2008). However, the mechanisms explaining why recently release men might engage in these high-risk sexual behaviors have not been adequately explored. This qualitative study presents findings which details black men's perceptions of how having recently been incarcerated impacts their sexual interactions with women including: how it might affect their desirability and their ability to negotiate sex with women - raising important points regarding gender power differentials and implications for HIV/STI transmission within this context of sexual partnering.

Participants articulated that women living in their neighborhoods perceived recently released men as healthier than men currently living in their neighborhoods. This perception of health was based on the belief that recently released men had abstained from sex and drugs while they were incarcerated and were less likely to have an STI or be considered a high-risk sexual partner. While the present study did not interview women, one qualitative study found that some women believed all inmates had undergone mandatory HIV testing prior to release (Comfort et al, 2005), supporting the perceptions of the men in the current study. If this belief extends to the neighborhoods to which participants of this study return, this could have important implications for risk-reduction behaviors - as it may decrease women's ability to negotiate condom use - and the transmission of HIV and other STIs. This set of beliefs is particularly dangerous in settings where both the turnover of correctional populations and HIV/STI rates are high.

Participants also reported that women in their neighborhoods would commonly compete with one another to gain, financial support, a committed relationship, or simply the opportunity to have sex with a recently released man. While the current study does not provide the perspective of the women who have had sex with recently released men, an existing body of literature indicates that in predominately black communities with high rates of incarceration, there is often a shortage of men (Aral et al., 2008; Dauria, Oakley, et al., 2015; Thomas et al., 2008). A recent study interviewed women living in the Atlanta, GA area in a community that had a shortage of men due to high rates of incarceration (Dauria, Elifson, et al., 2015). From the participants' perspective the high rates of incarceration reduced the number of desirable partners, and changed the type of relationships they had with those partners that were available. Women in that study discussed having shorter, more sex-focused relationships. Given the findings of that study it is possible that women would desire recently released men because they are novel, and may represent an opportunity for a committed relationship.

The perceptions of men in this study may allude to important differences in gender power in sexual partnerships. The absence of men alone changes the power dynamics within heterosexual partnerships. A decreased sex ratio means there are more women having sex with shared male partners, giving men the opportunity to be selective when choosing sexual partners and level of commitment (King, Latkin, & Davey-Rothwell, 2015; Thomas et al., 2008). For example, men may be more likely to choose partners who do not prioritize monogamy or feel less obligated to remain faithful with female partners that do (Thomas et al., 2008). In this particular context, however, where participants believe that recently released men are highly desired and women compete amongst each other for sexual opportunities the differences in gender power may be exacerbated. Men's perceived sexual desirability is relevant to masculine identity, particularly for men who have been marginalized, and denied opportunities to fulfill more traditional societal definitions of manhood (Bowleg et al., 2011a; Majors & Billson, 1992; Reidy et al., 2015). These

men place tremendous value on their sexual viability, generally ascribing to traditional masculine ideologies related to sex. Moreover, men with recent histories of incarceration may place even more value on sexual prowess after being in an environment in which their masculinity has been questioned or challenged. Existing work on masculinity and sexuality indicates, that men who ascribe to those traditional masculine beliefs are more likely to have multiple or concurrent partnerships, and less likely to negotiate condom use (Oparanozie, Sales, DiClemente, & Braxton, 2011; Wolfe, 2003). Following the assumption that these men are more desirable to women than the men currently living in their neighborhoods, with women competing against one another for sexual opportunities, women may have less power to negotiate condom use or faithful partnerships placing them at increased risk for HIV and other STI (Kerrigan et al., 2008; Wingood & Diclemente, 2000). Given existing literature on sexual risk behaviors of recently released men, and increased STI/HIV rates in communities with high incarceration rates, this has paramount importance for transmission of HIV and other STIs.

6.7 Limitations

The findings presented for this study should be interpreted within the context of the study's limitations. First, although men's perceptions of their own sexual desirability after release from a correctional facility merit considerable attention on their own, this study was not designed to capture the perspective of women who have had sex with recently released black men. So while the ways in which participants articulate the sexual experiences of recently released black men provides considerable insight into the dynamic of sexual relationships among recently released black men and their partners, it should be further validated with women's experiences and perspectives.

Second, the sample for this study was recruited primarily from Baltimore CBO's providing services to recently released men, thus most of the sample had some level of engagement with community resources, though that level of engagement varied. According to a study that

examined the experiences of inmates returning to Baltimore City after being released, about half of the respondents reported using some community services upon release (Visser et al., 2004). So for about half of those citizens who were returning to Baltimore, were not engaged with community resources, this study does not capture the experiences of those men. Men not connected with community resources may have increased levels of life instability and might be more likely to engage in high-risk behaviors.

This study also had a number of strengths. Due to the variation in age, relationship status and length of incarceration this study was able to capture a broad range of perspectives and experiences – strengthening the transferability of the findings. Additionally, by employing an inductive approach the study was able to identify important potential contributors to sexual risk behaviors of recently released black men living in Baltimore City.

6.8 Conclusions

This study adds to a developing body of literature examining the influence of incarceration on the dynamics of sexual partnering in low-income black communities. In this study, recently released men's perceptions of their own sexual desirability among women illuminate important implications regarding the custody of power in the sexual relationships of recently released men. To increase our contextual understanding of racial disparities in rates of HIV/AIDs and STIs, future work should focus on understanding whether this is a widespread attitude and how recently released men's perceptions of their desirability impacts their sexual risk behaviors. Moreover, we need to understand women's perceptions of recently released men's desirability and how that influences the dynamics of sexual partnering, as it is likely that this influence is more nuanced.

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Chapter 7: Manuscript 3 - The role of masculinity and peer influence in sexual risk behaviors of recently black released men

7.1 Abstract

Evidence suggests that recently released men engage in high-risk sexual behavior upon release from correctional facilities, but existing research only examines the impact of individual factors on these behaviors. This qualitative study explored social contextual factors relevant to these risk behaviors by describing factors that influence high-risk sexual behavior amongst recently released men and positing how those influences are shaped by gender norms. In-depth interviews were conducted with 19 recently released black men living in Baltimore, Maryland. Domains of exploration included: manhood, sexuality, and sexual behavior related to their experiences behind bars, and since their release. Data were analyzed using a combination of inductive and deductive approaches. Participants were motivated to have sex by their physical needs for sexual release and by actions of their peer-group, which promoted engagement in sexual risk behaviors. The ways in which these influences are shaped by masculine ideologies are discussed. Findings from this study illuminate factors that influence recently released men to engage in high-risk sexual behavior upon release, contextualizing their HIV/STI risk.

7.2 Introduction

The time period in which men are reintegrating into their communities after being released from correctional facilities poses considerable risk for engaging in HIV/STI risk behaviors. Evidence suggests recently released men report low rates of condom use and engage in sex with multiple and concurrent sexual partners (Adams et al., 2011; Epperson et al., 2010; Khan et al., 2009; Khan, Wohl, et al., 2008; Morrow et al., 2007). In low-income predominately black communities

where incarceration rates are high, sexual risk behaviors can significantly impact transmission and acquisition of HIV and other STIs (Dauria, Elifson, et al., 2015; Thomas et al., 2008).

Existing research has demonstrated the consequences of high-risk sexual behavior among recently released men on HIV/STI transmission in low-income black communities. A recent study conducted in predominately black communities in Atlanta, GA, found that census tracts with high rates of male incarceration also had high incidence of STI. Furthermore, census tracts with increasing rates of male incarceration had more rapidly increasing incidence of STI (Dauria, Elifson, et al., 2015). A study exploring associations between sex with a recently released male partner and STI risk for black females, found that those with a recently released male partner were more likely to use condoms inconsistently and to have newly diagnosed Chlamydia (Swartzendruber et al., 2012). A similar study indicated that women who had an incarcerated partner within the last year were more than twice as likely to have been newly infected with an STI (Rogers et al., 2012). This existing research suggests that the potential impact of sexual risk behaviors among recently released black men is significant. Therefore, it is critical to garner a more comprehensive understanding of the factors that may influence risk behaviors of recently released black men or impact the level of risk associated with particular HIV/STI risk behaviors.

To date, most research on risk behaviors of recently released men have focused on understanding trends in sexual risk behavior and subsequent HIV/STI risk for those men and their partners.

Largely these studies have been limited to examining the impact of individual factors (e.g. HIV serostatus, baseline sexual risk behaviors, use of drugs/alcohol) on sexual risk behaviors after release. What is absent from these studies is an in-depth exploration of the social-contextual factors, such as overlapping influences of gender norms and norms related to post-release sex that may be influencing the sexual behaviors of recently released men.

Gender norms are pervasive socially constructed ideas about acceptable female and male behavior, roles, and characteristics and can have powerful influences on health related behavior (Gupta, 2000). In particular, research on masculinity theory indicates that gender roles can influence sexual behaviors of men, often encouraging high-risk sexual behavior such as multiple and concurrent sexual partnerships both which can increase HIV/STI risk (Fleming & Agnew-Brune, 2015; Reidy et al., 2015). Male peer groups play a significant role in the construction of masculinity and establishment of culturally acceptable masculine norms (Anderson, 1999; Dadatsi, 2014; Dumas, Graham, Maxwell-Smith, & Wells, 2015). These norms, which espouse cultural expectations of sexual and other behaviors of men, are enforced by peers. Behaviors that represent masculinity may differ depending on the sub group and social context, but in most cultures demonstrations of heterosexuality are often used to signify or reify masculinity (Sweeney, 2014). For those social contexts in which sex, particularly casual sex, is highly valued a man's ability to accrue female sexual partners may be a measure of his worth (Anderson, 1999). Men who are better at performing according to culturally dominant masculine ideologies, gain deference and admiration from other men, and secure power and social status within the peer group (Bowleg et al., 2011a; Sweeney, 2014). This may be increasingly true for socially and economically marginalized black men for whom fulfilling sex-related masculine roles may have greater importance due to limited opportunities to uphold masculinity standards in other ways.

There are important differences in the construction of masculinity among black and white men living in the United States. Black masculinity can be described as an expression of manhood born out of struggle to achieve according to a Eurocentric or hegemonic ideal of manliness. Black men operate in a uniquely difficult space in which there are societal pressures to be upwardly mobile providers while living within a system which places constraints on their potential to do so (Nickleberry & Coleman, 2012; Spraggins, 1999). For some, living up to masculine norms requires overcoming limited educational opportunities, few employment options, systematic

racial discrimination, and a criminal justice system which disproportionately incarcerates black males (E. Carson, 2015; Nickleberry & Coleman, 2012; Whitehead et al., 1994). Denied the opportunities to fulfill the societal definition of manhood some black men have responded to these structural and systematic constraints by expressing masculinity in ways that place tremendous value on sexual prowess and viability (Glick et al., 2007; Goff et al., 2012; Harris, 1995). Though this is true for some socially and economically marginalized black men, it may have particular relevance for understanding and contextualizing HIV/STI risk among recently released men, the majority of whom represent both racially and economically marginalized populations.

The purpose of this study is to explore the social-contextual factors that may be relevant to sexual risk behaviors of recently released black men and important for describing HIV/STI risk for not only these men, but for the communities to which they return. Accordingly, the objectives of this paper are to (1) Explore what influences recently released black men to engage in sex immediately after release and to (2) Discuss how those influences might be shaped by hegemonic and racialized gender norms.

7.3 Study Context

Baltimore is a city of predominately black residents (63.1%), many of who are living in under-resourced communities profoundly impacted by incarceration (US Census Bureau, 2015; Justice Policy Institute, 2015; Walsh, 2010). With an incarceration rate nearly three times higher than the national average, in 2010 nearly 8000 of Baltimore city's 622,793 residents were incarcerated in Maryland State facilities (Justice Policy Institute, 2015). Because incarceration is often a symptom of broader systematic shortcomings, many of the communities in Baltimore with the highest incarceration rates are extraordinarily challenged by addiction, housing issues, violent crime, poor educational attainment, and limited opportunities for employment (Justice Policy

Institute, 2015). All of the men in this study were recruited from these disadvantaged communities in Baltimore City.

7.4 Methods

7.4.1 Participants

Nineteen black men released from prison or jail within the past 12 months were enrolled in the present study. The average age was 33 years ($SD = 6.4$). The average length of time since release was 3.8 months and the average length of time incarcerated was 50 months, or about 4 years. The majority of participants ($n=18$) had been incarcerated more than once, with an average of six lifetime incarcerations. All participants report a history of involvement in drug-related crime. One participant self-identified as homosexual, and all others self-identified as heterosexual. Nine participants indicated that they were in a relationship (defined as either married or having a girlfriend/boyfriend) and all others were single.

7.4.2 Recruitment

Study participants were recruited using three different methods: passive and active recruitment from Baltimore community based organizations (CBOs) that provide services for recently released men, recruitment from participants of HIV prevention studies conducted at a community-based research facility, and snowball sampling. Fourteen participants were recruited from CBOs, four were recruited through snowball sampling, and the final participant was recruited from an HIV prevention study. Because participants were primarily recruited from Baltimore CBOs, most participants were engaged with community services at the time of enrollment. Participants were receiving a variety of resources and support including interpersonal skill development, job readiness services, educational equivalency programs, case management, substance abuse treatment, and vocational training to facilitate successful reintegration into society and their communities.

7.4.3 Screening and Eligibility

Prospective participants were screened for eligibility, by phone or in person using the following inclusion criteria: male sex, age between 21-40 years, and a history of incarceration in which they were either (1) released in the last 12 months after serving at least one consecutive year in either a prison (state or federal) or jail or (2) released within the last 12 months after serving 2 or more consecutive months in either a prison (state or federal) or jail and have been released in the past 3 years after serving at least one consecutive year. The criterion for the present study was chosen to enroll men who had both significant (based upon length of time) and recent incarceration experiences, consistent with relevant literature.

7.4.4 Interview Instrument

A semi-structured interview instrument guide was developed using existing literature around masculinity, sexuality, incarceration, reentry, and sexual risk behaviors, with input from an experienced qualitative researcher and a staff member at one CBO who had a recent incarceration history. The guide was constructed to be intentionally broad and open-ended to facilitate discussion and exploration of lesser-known topics. Areas for exploration included: (1) life during reentry, (2) life during incarceration, (3) manhood and masculinity and (4) sexual behaviors – both while incarcerated and the first week following their release.

7.5.5 Data Collection and Analysis

Between October 2014 and June 2015 the student investigator conducted 22 interviews with 19 participants at a research facility that conducts community-based HIV prevention research. All participants were verbally consented prior to the start of interviews. Each participant was interviewed at least once and follow-up interviews were conducted with three participants. Follow-up interviews were conducted if interview domains were not addressed during initial interviews (due to time constraints) or if the student investigator deemed it necessary to probe further on particular participant responses. Interview lengths varied, with initial interviews lasting

from about one to two hours, and follow-up interviews lasting from 20 minutes to one hour. All interviews were audio-recorded, and later transcribed by either the student investigator or a professional transcription service. After each interview was completed participants were given a brief demographic survey and were asked if they would be willing to pass on a study referral card to someone they knew who might be interested in participating in the study. This snowball technique was used to expand study recruitment. All participants were given \$25 compensation for their time upon interview completion. Names of participants were replaced with pseudonyms to protect confidentiality.

Using several sampling strategies, the student investigator sought to construct a racially diverse sample of participants. This yielded a sample of 19 black and one white participant. Because race is a critical social construct shaping HIV/STI risk of men and there is not much that can be surmised by the experience of a single individual, this study focuses only on the experiences of the 19 black participants. Transcripts were uploaded to MAXQDA, qualitative analysis software that assists with data organizing, coding, and analysis. Data were analyzed using a combination of deductive and inductive approaches in several phases (Kavanaugh, n.d.). The first phase was data immersion, in which the student investigator read transcripts to identify major organizing ideas. In the second phase the student investigator developed and refined the coding scheme. A priori codes were developed based upon domains described above in the interview guide as well as relevant literature. Upon application of a priori codes to transcript data, emergent themes were identified and incorporated into the coding scheme. The coding scheme was refined using an iterative approach over three separate rounds of coding. The third and fourth phases of analysis were guided by the Constant Comparative Method of Qualitative Analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). This method outlines a systematic approach to categorical analysis of data with the following steps: (1) comparing incidents applicable to each category, (2) integrating categories and their properties (3) delimiting the theory, and (4) writing the theory.

A doctoral student with related interests in incarceration and health double coded 10 of the 22 transcripts, and met with the student investigator weekly to discuss and reconcile differences in coding. Consistent with the strategies described by Lincoln and Guba, to insure that the analysis produced credible findings, the second coder assisted in peer debriefing, (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Peer debriefing is a process where an investigator works with an unbiased peer who probes the investigators thinking around aspects of the research process. This gave the student investigator the opportunity to: (1) critically analyze findings (2) support the iterative nature of qualitative research by providing the student investigator with the opportunity to articulate and develop emerging hypotheses and impressions of the data, and (3) challenge personal biases.

The study was reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. The National Institute on Allergy and Infectious Diseases issued a Certificate of Confidentiality to further insure protection of participants' confidentiality and protection from subpoena.

7.6 Results

Participants described various ways in which they were influenced to engage in sexual activity following release. They reflected on their own personal experiences and described the perspectives of other men with recent experiences of incarceration. Discussions focused on intense needs to obtain physical satiation of sexual needs and the involvement of participants' male friends, henceforth referred to as peers, in encouraging, supporting, or facilitating sexual risk behaviors.

7.6.1 Need for Physical 'Release'

For most participants having sex soon after release was seen as critically important. For some men this was prioritized over seeing family and friends. Men described having intense needs to have sex because they had abstained for long periods of time and had increased unmet sexual

needs. The physical release accompanying sex was an important factor that influenced participants to have sex immediately after being release. One participant, Steven, described the urgent need for sex that men have soon after they are released.

P: Oh, that's [sex], that's gon' happen first 24 hours... Especially if you done did like a decade or better, or decades. Yeah within the first two days. Yeah, that's what you gone try and get.

I: And so, why?

P: Why? You backed up. You sexually frustrated. -*Steven*

When asked to discuss why sex was important for recently released men one participant, Jason, discussed his preoccupation with sex after his release. He said:

...'Cause you got, like-- like, I had three years of backup in me. So that's the first thing you think about...Uh...that's the first thing you think about when you come home. You gotta-- it's like-- it's like built up steam in you... and you gotta-- you gotta release it. So-- yeah. -*Jason*

Another participant, Marcus, echoed similar sentiments about his increased need for sex after release. He specifically mentioned how he was limited in the ways he could address his sexual needs during his incarceration. He said:

Cuz it [sex] was one of the things. The things that you can't get in life are always the things that you want more. When you are used to having sex, like human beings are sexual beings naturally anyway. Everybody feels aroused...So when you're gone that long and you can't get any type of release for that outside of masturbation, when you first come home it's like... that's the thing you know. I want some pussy, you know what I'm sayin'. I want some pussy...

-Marcus

7.6.2 Peer Influence

Peers of recently release black men influenced their sexual behaviors immediately after their release both indirectly, through encouragement and questioning heterosexuality, directly, by arranging sexual encounters in which they invited sexually available women to have sex with recently released men.

7.6.2.a Encouraging Sexual Risk Behavior

Participants were asked to comment on how their friends reacted to their sexual activity after release, or the sexual activity of other recently released men they knew. The majority of participants reported that their friends encouraged them to have sex or shared in their excitement. For example, in the exchange below one participant, Irvin, said:

I: So going back to what you were saying before that last statement, how do other men, friends or whatever, react to men who are recently released having sex very soon after they get out?

P: They like. 'Yeah man you doin' the right thing,' they encourage that you know. They don't discourage it. They more than likely encourage it, that's what I can say about that. -

Irvin

Another participant, David, echoed a similar perspective when he was asked how his friends would react to him having multiple sexual partners after release. He said, "They be happy for you, lotta times they wanna participate with you – you know." Will also reflected on how recently released men's peers might encourage high-risk sexual behavior. He was asked to discuss how peers might react to a recently released man having multiple sexual partners. He indicated that while it was common for men's peers to encourage this behavior, some friends might also pair that encouragement with concern for HIV/STI risk.

I mean they gone pat him on the back [and say], ‘Boy you, you rollin’ aint you boy?’
Then you got some [who say], ‘Boy you better slow down boy its dangerous out here,
you putting them condoms on?’ - *Will*

7.6.2b Questioning Heterosexuality

Peers appeared to be an important element in shaping participants’ perspectives regarding the expectations around or normative aspects of post-release sexual activity. The quotes above, illustrate that peers were supportive of recently released men’s choice to engage in sexual activity, sometimes encouraging high-risk sexual behavior. In further discussions regarding peer influence, several participants intimated that although peers were most often supportive of their sexual activity, or that of other recently released men, they might also ridicule those men who did not to have sex upon release. Participants were asked to respond to a hypothetical situation in which a recently released man would decide to not have sex, and to comment on how their peers might react. Several participants stated that their sexuality would be questioned in some way if they decided to not engage in sexual activity upon release. For example, in the exchange below David discusses how his friends might react if he chose not to have sex with a woman upon release. He suggests his friends might interpret such abstinence as evidence that he had become gay during his incarceration.

I: So can you answer a hypothetical question for me? You’ve told me that sex is an important part of coming home. What if you came home and said you didn’t want to have sex? How would they respond to that?

P: They probably slap me beside [my head]... ‘Boy what is wrong with you? [If] you don’t get yourself in here’ you know like. ‘What’s going on with you, like you aint cross over [became gay] on us?’” Stuff like that, like yeah. -*David*

Another participant, Jamal, had a similar response when he was asked to discuss how friends might react to a recently released man turning down the opportunity to have sex with a woman shortly after being released. He intimated that friends of recently released men might assume he had existing plans with another woman, or suspect that he was on the ‘down low,’ meaning that he was outwardly living a heterosexual lifestyle while discretely having sex with other men.

It’s two things, its either alright cool you must have plans with another female and that’s cool, so shorty can go about her business. Or you might be on the down low... - *Jamal*

Steven shared an experience he had in which some of his peers questioned his sexuality because he chose not to pursue the advances of women just after his release. He said:

P: ...I got like 4 numbers that night, and I could have had sex with all of ‘em, but I chose not to because I had a significant other. And they were like ‘Man what you gay?’ [I said] nah I’m just committed to her because she was there for me...

I: Uh huh, you said when you got those numbers you were with some of your friends?

P: Yeah it was me, my sister, and my brother-in-law...My man told me that, he like ‘What you gay?’ I’m like “No...” - *Steven*

7.6.2.c Arranging Sexual Encounters

The peers of recently released men influenced their sexual behaviors indirectly by encouraging high-risk sexual behavior and questioning the sexuality of men who turned down sex. Importantly peers also directly influenced sexual behaviors by arranging sexual encounters with sexually available women. When asked to talk about his first sexual encounter after release David described a celebration that his friends organized for him he said:

Well my homeboys they gave me a celebration coming home, you know there was females, there was alcohol, you know... they went down to Norma Jeans, its this little

spot downtown on Baltimore Street, it's a strip club...they spent like \$500 on a female...

-David

Another participant, Marcus, described his first sexual encounter after release that was arranged by a family member.

She knew I was comin' over [to her house] to have sex like that's...I just came home and that's what I was comin' over there for. My cousin had already told her or whatever. We didn't know each other, this was my first time seein' her ... I didn't find [her] attractive cuz I don't use drugs, I don't smoke, I don't drink, I don't do none of that. You smoke cigarettes and smoke PCP and all that bunch of stuff and that's not attractive to me... -

Marcus

Many participants reflected on their experiences regarding arranged sexual encounters. Some participants were asked whether or not they believed they were expected to have sex upon release. They agreed that, yes, they were expected to have sex, with one participant stating that was particularly true if you were a recently released man. One participant, Sean, shared a story of one of his friends who had been recently released describing how members of his friend's peer group discussed arranging a sexual encounter for him. The implicit expectation that his friend would take advantage of this arranged sexual opportunity is evidenced by his friends' expectations to hear details about the sex the following day.

P:...Look you might talk to them the night before you're ready to come home [and they say] 'Yeah I went and holla at such and such, which one [woman] you want? We gone go out when you get out and drop you off over they house.' Something like that..'

I: And how do your friends... you just told me that they sometimes will set it up for you, but how do they react?

P: They reacting the same way you is, they excited like you was. They wanna know the 411. How was it? You know stuff like that when you see ‘em the next day. -*Sean*

7.7 Discussion

Existing research indicates that men recently released from incarceration engage in high-risk sexual behavior (Adams et al., 2011; Epperson et al., 2010; Khan et al., 2009; Khan, Wohl, et al., 2008; Morrow et al., 2007). To date, most of that work has established trends in sexual risk behavior upon release and explored the influence of particular individual level factors on those behaviors. This study details findings of men’s perceptions regarding peer influences on recently released men’s sexual behavior. Results provide necessary contextual understanding of high-risk sexual behavior some men engage in upon release.

Participants appeared highly motivated to have sex upon release given their reported intense needs for sexual release. However, those motivations must be understood within the context of peer influences and an understanding of how those influences reflect socially pervasive gender norms and expectations within their community. Masculine gender theory posits that demonstrations of heterosexuality are central to expressing manhood and communicating one’s masculinity to others (Bowleg et al., 2011a; Connell, 1995; Sweeney, 2014). Moreover, the powerlessness that accompanies inability to fulfill traditional masculine roles can threaten the masculine identity of some men who have been marginalized (Majors & Billson, 1992; Nickleberry & Coleman, 2012). Empirical evidence indicates that men, subsequently, feel compelled to prove their masculinity by placing increasing emphasis on demonstrations of sexual prowess (Copenhaver et al., 2000; Goff et al., 2012; Harris, 1995; Reidy et al., 2015). Although participants did not explicitly connect their physical need for sex with feelings of undermined masculinity, there is significant evidence in existing literature discussing the denigrating impact of incarceration on masculine identity (Hsu, 2005; Jewkes, 2005; Karp, 2010; Phillips, 2001). Recently released black men, many who have experienced significant marginalization, loss of

personal agency, and who had significantly limited resources or opportunities to express their manhood while incarcerated (Karp, 2010; Phillips, 2001), might place great value on sex upon release, consistent with theoretical frameworks on masculinity, which describe demonstrations of heterosexuality as central to expressing manhood and communicating your masculinity to others.

These findings must also be interpreted with an understanding of the homophobic and heteronormative nature of correctional facilities. The participants in the present study had recent experiences of incarceration that likely influenced the emphasis they placed on having sex with women upon release. Recent work examining the social construction of sexuality in prison has identified a pervasive presence of homophobia among participants with a complementary need to assert their heterosexuality, in order to distance themselves from homosexuality (Sit & Ricciardelli, 2013). Indeed, participants in the present study may use sexual encounters with women as a way to reaffirm their masculinity and heterosexuality, gain respect from and bond with other men, and avoid being associated with homosexuality both behind bars and in their communities (Bowleg et al., 2011b; Harris, 1995). Men whose peers arrange sexual encounters for them may be particularly vulnerable to judgments regarding their sexuality, and lose opportunities to reinforce their masculinity or bond with other men if they turn down these sexual opportunities. This has important implications regarding recently released black men's agency over partner selection and may encourage participation in unwanted, high-risk sex with less desirable partners. So while men may be internally motivated by their perceived physical need for sex, those motivations may be shaped by powerful racialized gender constructs that are enforced by peers who can directly influence their sexual risk behaviors. Importantly though, this study focuses only on the experiences of recently released black men, so the findings presented cannot argue that the experiences of black men are distinctly different from men of other races. However, an extensive body of literature purporting the importance of race in shaping conceptualizations of

masculinity and the significance of sexual prowess argue the relevance of participants' race in these experiences.

The extent to which masculine gender norms influence post-release sexual behaviors and practices has important implications for transmission of HIV and other STI in the communities to which recently released black men return. In the US the normative construction of masculinity requires men to express a predilection to sports, be strong, emotionally distant, and independent (Majors & Billson, 1992; Ward, 2005). A significant part of the conceptualization of manhood also requires men to reject all things considered weak or feminine, and sometimes exert power and control over what's weak and feminine (Connell, 1995). Because gender and sexuality are often conflated, normative construction of masculinity is 'inherently heterosexist and homophobic' (Ward, 2005). According to masculine theory, this then drives some black men to behave in ways that emphasize heterosexual sex in order to avoid being labeled as a homosexual and to shore up or legitimate their own masculinity (Harris, 1995; Kimmel & Mahler, 2003; Ward, 2005). The heterosexist and homophobic tone of incarceration experiences along with existing homophobia in the communities (Ward, 2005) to which recently released black men return may influence sexual risk behaviors beyond what may be expected from hypermasculine ideologies alone. It is true that racialized masculine values promote sexual permissiveness and prowess, but the sum total of influences on these men's sexual behaviors is likely more nuanced. Having been incarcerated may position them in ways that make them especially vulnerable to feelings of insecurity around their sexual identity, and vulnerable to peer influences on sexual risk taking.

7.8 Limitations

The findings presented for this research must be interpreted within the context of the study's limitations. First, although this study provides powerful insight into recently released black men's motivations for having sex, and how those motivations may be reinforced or shaped by peer influences, this study cannot empirically address how peer influences change HIV/STI risk.

Second, the sample for this study was recruited primarily from Baltimore CBO's providing services to recently released men, thus most of the sample had some level of engagement with community resources, though that level of engagement varied. According to a study that explored the experiences of inmates returning to Baltimore City after being released, about half of the respondents reported using some community services upon release (Visher et al., 2004). So about half of those citizens returning to Baltimore were not engaged with community resources. This study does not capture the experiences of those men. Men not connected with community resources may have increased levels of life instability and might be more likely to engage in high-risk behaviors.

This study also had a number of strengths. Due to the variation in age, relationship status and length of incarceration this study was able to capture a broad range of perspectives and experiences – strengthening the potential transferability of the findings. Additionally, by employing an inductive qualitative approach the study was able to explore recently released black men's motivations for having sex, and explore how peers might influence post-release sexual behavior.

7.9 Conclusions

This study contributes to a body of literature examining the influence of masculinity on sexual behavior and HIV/STI risk by exploring the relevancy of gender norms in motivating sexual risk behavior in a vulnerable population at increased risk for HIV and other sexually transmitted infections. The factors influencing recently released black men's motivations to engage in sex illuminate the normative expectations to engage in post-release sex and the social pressures to conform to those norms. To increase our understanding of recently release men's HIV/STI risk, future work should focus on addressing how internal motivations for sex and peer-enforced gender norms effect HIV/STI risk in the post-release period.

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Chapter 8: Discussion

8.1 Summary of Findings

Jointly, the three studies of this research explored social contextual factors relevant to sexual risk behaviors of recently released black men, in order to understand the mechanisms behind such behaviors and implications for subsequent HIV/STI risk. The first study explored the context of recently released black men's sexual encounters, by describing the people with whom they had sex and the ways in which those encounters were established. Findings from this work illuminate the ways recently released black men obtain sex partners and how that may differentially impact their risk for HIV/STIs. The second and third studies build on the findings of the first by focusing on how black men with recently released status and their social environment interact with one another to shape HIV/STI risk. Specifically, the second study examines participants' understanding of how their recently released status impacts the dynamics of sexual partnering in their communities. This investigation revealed participants' perception that men's recently released status created sexual opportunities for them post-release. The final study comprising this work continued the examination on how recently released men's interactions with their social environment create or augment sexual risk. This study examined factors that influenced high-risk sexual behavior amongst recently released black men. Findings from this study indicated that recently release black men were influenced to engage in post-release sex by their own needs for physical release and by the actions of their peer-group, which promoted engagement in sexual risk behaviors. Together these findings suggest that sexual risk behaviors of recently released black men are a contextually complex phenomenon, influenced by many different social factors, which ultimately shape HIV/STI risk among this population. The remainder of this chapter will outline key findings of each of these studies and discuss the implications and significance of this body of work.

8.2 Main Conclusions

8.2.1 Manuscript 1

This study explored recently released black men's sexual encounters by identifying the ways men obtained sex and used condoms during the immediate post-release period. Participants reported engaging in casual sex, often with previous sex partners, or transactional sex with female sex workers. Participants also described situations in which their friends arranged sexual encounters for them, soon after their release, with sexually permissive women. As part of this discussion participants shared their attitudes and beliefs regarding condom use, explaining why they or other recently released men might choose to wear condoms with particular sex partners, while choosing to have unprotected sex with others. Participants reported that they always used protection when purchasing sex to avoid contracting HIV or other sexually transmitted infections, but rarely used condoms with committed partners. However, men felt it was challenging to consistently use condoms soon after their release regardless of what kind of partner they were having sex with due to desires for enhanced sensation, and the need to satisfy sexual appetite.

Participants' accounts of pathways and strategies used to obtain sex partners suggest that recently released black men may be interfacing with sexual networks that carry high HIV/STI risk. Factors such as prolonged displacement from their communities and subsequent social dysfunction experienced when men are released, may make them more likely to rely on easily accessible, often high-risk, sex partners. This in conjunction with participant reported inconsistent condom use, during post-release sex suggests that recently released black men's sexual behaviors and the social environment in which those behaviors take place, puts them at higher risk for transmission and acquisition of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections.

8.2.2 Manuscript 2

This study examines the ways in which exposure to incarceration impacts the dynamics of sexual partnering between recently released men and their sex partners, by exploring men's perceptions of their own sexual desirability during the post-release period. Participants believed their recently released status increased their sexual desirability among women in their neighborhoods based upon the perception that recently released men were healthier than other eligible sexual partners in their communities and offered increased potential for sexual gratification, opportunities for financial stability, and the opportunity to establish lasting romantic partnerships. Men believed these perceptions increased their opportunities for sex and gave them more power to negotiate sex, with some participants suggesting that women competed with one another for the affections of recently released men.

Findings from this study raise important points regarding gender power differentials and implications for HIV/STI transmission within this context of sexual partnering. In communities where it is common for men to become incarcerated, there are many more women than men, creating a power imbalance in sexual partnering (Kerrigan et al., 2008; Wingood & Diclemente, 2000). In this setting there are more women having sex with fewer men, giving men the opportunity to be selective when choosing sexual partners and the level of commitment with those partners (Kerrigan et al., 2008; Wingood & Diclemente, 2000). However, in this social environment where participants report that women compete amongst each other for sexual opportunities based upon the belief that recently released men are highly desired low risk sex partners, the differences in gender power may be exacerbated in ways which affect HIV/STI risk. Women may feel disempowered in their sexual interactions with men and have diminished ability to negotiate condom use or other sexually protective behaviors – changing their risk as well as their partner's risk for HIV/STI.

8.2.3 Manuscript 3

This study describes factors that influence high-risk sexual behavior among recently released black men and discusses how those influences might be shaped by gender norms. Participants discussed being motivated to engage in sexual activity by intense physical needs for sex after long periods of sexual abstinence while incarcerated. Those physical needs for sex were discussed in conjunction with the involvement of participant's same-gender friends in encouraging, supporting, or directly facilitating sexual risk behaviors. Participants' peers indirectly influenced their sexual behaviors by encouraging them to have sex, sometimes supporting high-risk sexual behavior, and questioned the sexuality of recently released men who turned down opportunities for sex with women. Peers also directly influenced the sexual behaviors of recently released black men by organizing sexual opportunities for them with available women.

Participants' internal motivations for sex should be understood in conjunction with the influence of peers and the extent to which their encouragement and facilitation of sexual risk behavior, and judgment in the absence of, are a reflection of socially pervasive gender norms and expectations of men. The heterosexist focus of dominant masculine culture is widely accepted (Bowleg et al., 2011a; Connell, 1995; Majors & Billson, 1992). Men are expected to achieve according to heterosexist and, inextricably linked, homophobic norms and practices. Recently released black men, many who have experienced significant marginalization, loss of personal agency, and who had significantly limited resources to express their manhood and heterosexuality while incarcerated (Karp, 2010; Phillips, 2001), might place tremendous value on sex upon release. Having sex soon after release stands to offer, previously non-existent, opportunity to reaffirm masculinity. Peer facilitation of sexual risk behavior, both perpetuates the link between sex and manhood, and in some ways contractually obligates recently released men to buy in or risk judgment. Men whose peers arrange sexual encounters for them may be particularly vulnerable to

judgments regarding their sexuality, and lose opportunities to reinforce their masculinity or bond with other men if they turn down these sexual opportunities. It is true that recently released black men are internally motivated by their own physical need for sex, but those motivations may be shaped by powerful gender constructs that when enforced by peers who have the ability to directly influence sexual risk behaviors, may impact HIV/STI risk.

8.3 Study Implications

Findings from this research have implications for public health, HIV/STI prevention efforts, and future directions of investigation. Overall, this work identifies mechanisms which support the assertion that sexual risk behaviors of recently released men may be an important driver of HIV/STI rates in communities with high rates of male incarceration. Findings demonstrate the existence of norms and expectations around post-release sex that encourage and facilitate high-risk sexual behavior, which may promote transmission of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections in Baltimore City. Collectively these studies suggest that participants' recently released status influences how they interact with social and sexual networks in ways that may modify their HIV/STI risk during the immediate post-release period.

Because 1 in 5 young black men in Baltimore is incarcerated (Lotke & Ziedenberg, 2005) and recidivism is common, recently released black men's risk of HIV/STIs is not isolated to one post-release period. Increasingly limited employment opportunities combined with financial obligation means that incarceration is increasingly unavoidable; and many of these young men will return to illegal financial pursuits and become incarcerated again. So, the patterns of risk behaviors illuminated by the findings of these studies are not temporally limited, but rather cyclical. The impact of these individual sexual behaviors becomes compounded, many times over, with the knowledge that thousands of black men return to Baltimore City from prisons and jails annually (Visser et al., 2004).

Relevant to prevention, these studies highlight a need for focused HIV/STI prevention efforts for recently released young black men in Baltimore City. Findings from this work suggest that these young men are uniquely vulnerable to HIV and other sexually transmitted infections due to their incarceration history, because that recent incarceration history changes the way they interface with sexual networks, and the kinds of sexual networks they interface with. HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections are not coincidentally distributed among black men, and it is critical to tailor prevention efforts in recognition of the social forces that shape their risk. Many recently released black men avail themselves of employment development programs and other life skill building resources to assist transition back into the community (Bowleg & Raj, 2012; Visher et al., 2004). Operating within existing structure of community-based organizations is a tremendous opportunity to engage these men in much needed primary HIV prevention programming. HIV prevention, though, should also be approached structurally. This work has demonstrated clear norms and practices of post-release sexual behavior, and these patterns of behavior may contribute to elevated HIV/STI risk, particularly in communities with high rates of incarceration. We know from existing literature that incarceration uniquely contributes to black men's risk for HIV and other sexually transmitted infections (Epperson et al, 2010). And because incarceration is an undeniable reality for many black men, individually targeted HIV prevention efforts should be done in conjunction with efforts to reduce rates of incarceration and recidivism among black men.

Findings from this work demonstrate a clear need for continued investigation in the ways in which introducing recently released black men back into their communities impacts dynamics of sexual partnering between black men and women. Future research should, in some ways, mirror the goals of this work by exploring what social factors motivate and influence women to engage in sexual activity with recently released men, broadening our understanding of the sexual networks men interface with upon release. This direction of investigation would allow for further

validation of men's accounts, particularly those concerning their perceptions of women's beliefs. But it also provides the opportunity to deepen our understanding of sexual partnering between recently released black men and women, better positioning us to evaluate HIV/STI risk among this population during this critical time period.

This work identified specific norms and practices relevant to sexual risk behaviors of recently released black men. However this work is limited by its scope, in that it was not designed to determine, empirically, how gender norms, as well as norms specific to post-release sexual behavior actually affect men's sexual behaviors. Future research should build upon the findings of this work and examine how peer-influenced gender norms and post-release sex norms encourage recently released black men to engage in high-risk sexual behaviors.

8.4 Contributions To Literature

The findings of this body of work make several important contributions to the literature on health of correctional populations. Existing research indicates that recently released men engage in high-risk sexual activity at the time of release (Epperson et al., 2010; Khan et al., 2009; Khan, Wohl, et al., 2008;). They are more likely to have multiple and concurrent sexual partnerships, and less likely to use condoms than men without recent incarceration history (Epperson et al., 2010; Khan et al., 2009; Khan, Wohl, et al., 2008). These present studies expand upon these findings by using qualitative methods to explore mechanisms behind such behaviors and the role of social contextual factors in influencing risk behaviors and subsequently HIV/STI risk for recently released black men. Specifically this work illuminates sexual norms and practices specific to the immediate post-release period that promote HIV/STI risk behaviors and explores how these sexual norms and practices are shaped by men's recently released status and contextually defined gender norms. These findings better position public health professionals to understand the complexities of this phenomenon and evaluate HIV/STI risk for recently released black men.

In addition to building upon existing research, this work also examines the impacts of incarceration on the sexual health of communities using a novel perspective. Existing research focuses on how removal of black men from their communities via high rates of incarceration can change the size and composition of sexual networks in ways that promote the spread of HIV/AIDS and other STI's (Aral et al., 2008; Dauria, Oakley, et al., 2015; Potterat et al., 1999). The present studies, however, examine how reintroducing men into communities at the time of release might affect HIV/STI risk for recently released men.

While the findings of this work contribute to literature on the health of correctional populations, it also makes important contributions to HIV/AIDS disparities literature. Past research on HIV/AIDS rates in the United States indicates that differences in reported sexual behavior cannot solely account for racial disparities in the rates of HIV (Aral et al., 2008; Hallfors et al., 2007). In light of this analysis it became critical to examine racial disparities in sexual health outcomes, using an approach that prioritized understanding social forces that can affect sexual behaviors, networks and risk, rather than examining behaviors in isolation (Adaora a Adimora & Schoenbach, 2002, 2005; Aral et al., 2008). Incarceration is an important social force that impacts sexual networks and sexual risk, particularly in predominantly black low-income communities. This work examines incarceration's impact on sexual behavior by providing insight into the mechanisms behind sexual risk behaviors of recently released black men and contextualizes HIV/STI risk among a subset of men under the supervision of the criminal justice system. Findings of this research provide further explanation on why such tremendous racial disparities in HIV/AIDs may be observed and gives added credence to the importance of social contextual factors in determining health outcomes.

8.5 Strengths and Limitations

Findings from this body of work must be interpreted within the context of the studies' limitations. First, this research was not designed to capture the perspectives of women. So while the ways in

which participants articulate the sexual experiences of recently released black men provides considerable insight into the social and contextual elements of post-release sexual behavior, it should be further validated with the experiences and perspectives of women who have had sex with recently released men. Second, although these studies identify sexual norms and practices relevant to the post-release period, this study cannot empirically evaluate how these norms, practices, and expectations affect participants' actual sexual risk behaviors. Third, the sample for this study was recruited primarily from Baltimore CBO's providing services to recently released men, thus most of the sample had some level of engagement with community resources, though that level of engagement varied. According to a study that examined the experiences of inmates returning to Baltimore City after being released, about half of the respondents reported using some community services upon release (Visher et al., 2004). So for about half of those citizens who were returning to Baltimore, were not engaged with community resources, this study does not capture the experiences of those men. Men not connected with community resources may have increased levels of life instability and at increased vulnerability for engaging in high-risk behaviors. Finally because this work focuses only on the experiences of black men, these data have limited utility in arguing that the experiences of recently released black men are distinctly different from men of other races with recent histories of incarceration.

Despite these limitations this body of work explores the social context of recently released black men's sexual behaviors, and makes critical contributions to correctional health and HIV/AIDS disparities literature. A major strength of this body of work is the use of qualitative methods. This is the first study to provide in-depth investigation of the sexual behaviors of recently released men, and the first to explore how reintroducing previously incarcerated black men into their communities impacts their sexual health. Furthermore, the variation in age, relationship status, and length of incarceration among participants made it possible to capture a broad range of perspectives and experiences – strengthening the transferability of the findings.

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Appendix A: In-Depth Interview Guide – Version 1

Men, Masculinities, & Reentry Study: In-depth Interview Guide

The purpose of this study is to talk with you about the experiences you've had both during and after incarceration. I will ask you questions about manhood, relationships, sexual experiences, and any factors that may influence sexual behaviors after incarceration. There are no right or wrong answers to these questions, I'm just interested in hearing about your experience. If at anytime you feel uncomfortable answering any of these questions, let me know and I will move on to the next question. If you don't have any questions we will go ahead and get started.

Before we get into the questions I would like to learn a little more about you. Please start with telling me where you were incarcerated and for how long?

LIFE IN REENTRY

1. What has life been like since your release?
2. What has been the hardest thing to get used to since being released?
3. How have people in your life reacted to your recent incarceration?
4. Do you think being incarcerated changed you? In what ways?

LIFE DURING INCARCERATION

1. What was most frustrating about life in prison/jail?
2. Did you form relationships with other inmates? What were those relationships like?
3. While you were incarcerated, what did you miss most?
4. What do you remember most about your time in prison/jail?

MANHOOD AND MASCULINITY

1. How important was it for you to be tough when you were in prison/jail? How important is that now?
2. How important was your reputation? How important is that now?
3. Was it important to be able to defend yourself? Why? How important is that now?
4. Was it important to prove you were stronger than another inmate? How might you prove that?
5. How might the experiences you've had in prison/jail affect the way you feel about being tough? Your reputation?

SEXUAL BEHAVIORS

1. How important is sex in prison/jail?
2. In prison/jail if an inmate kissed or had sex with another inmate, how would other inmates react to that? How would men outside react to that?
3. How important is sex to men who have recently got out of prison/jail?
4. After release from prison/jail, what do men do to satisfy sexual desire/needs? How might other men react to that?
5. What were your sexual relationships like before being incarcerated?
6. What are your sexual relationships like now?
7. How might the experiences you had in prison/jail affect your current sexual relationships?

CLOSING QUESTIONS

1. What was positive about your incarceration experience?
2. What has been positive about your life since your release?
3. What is your greatest hope for your future

Appendix B: Demographic Survey

Brothers, Masculinities, & Reentry Study - Participant Characteristics Survey

Thank you for participating in this study. There are a few more questions I'd like to ask you. Just like the information you provided during the interview this survey will remain completely confidential.

1. What is your race/ethnicity?

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Black
- ☐ White
- ☐ Hispanic
- ☐ Asian
- ☐ American Indian or Alaska Native
- ☐ Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- ☐ Other

2. How old are you?

.....

3. What is your sex?

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

4. What is your sexual identity?

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Heterosexual
- ☐ Homosexual
- ☐ Bisexual

5. Who have you had sex with?

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Men
- ☐ Women
- ☐ Both

6. Please check the highest degree or level of education you have earned.

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ No Schooling
- ☐ Less than High School
- ☐ Some High School
- ☐ High School Diploma/GED
- ☐ Trade School
- ☐ Some College
- ☐ College Diploma
- ☐ More than College

7. What is your relationship status?

Check all that apply.

- ☐ Single
- ☐ Girlfriend
- ☐ Boyfriend
- ☐ Married
- ☐ Widowed
- ☐ Divorced

8. How many children do you have?

.....

9. Where did you last serve time?

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Prison
- ☐ Jail

10. How many months ago were you released from prison or jail?

.....

11. Most recently, how much time did you serve in prison or jail?

.....

12. **While incarcerated did you ever have sexual contact with another inmate?**

Mark only one oval.

☐ Yes

☐ No

13. **How many total times have you been incarcerated in either prison or jail?**

.....

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Appendix C: In-depth Interview Guide Version 2

Men, Masculinities, & Reentry Study: In-depth Interview Guide

The purpose of this study is to talk with you about the experiences you've had both during and after incarceration. I will ask you questions about manhood, relationships, sexual experiences, and any factors that may influence sexual behaviors after incarceration. There are no right or wrong answers to these questions, I'm just interested in hearing about your experience. If at anytime you feel uncomfortable answering any of these questions, let me know and I will move on to the next question. If you don't have any questions we will go ahead and get started. **Before we get into the questions I would like to learn a little more about you. Please start with telling me where you were most recently incarcerated and for how long?**

Life in Reentry

5. Tell me what life has been like since your release?
 - a. What has been the hardest thing to get used to?
6. How have people in your life reacted to your recent incarceration?
7. Do you think being incarcerated changed you?
 - a. How has it changed you?
 - b. Tell me what you like about yourself now.
 - c. Tell me what you don't like about yourself now.

Life During Incarceration

5. Tell me what your life was like when you were incarcerated.
 - a. Who did you hang out with? Form relationships with?
 - b. Did you ever have trouble getting along with people?
6. What was most frustrating about being in prison/jail?
7. What did you miss when you were incarcerated?

Manhood and Masculinity

6. Tell me what you think it means to be a man?
7. Tell me what you think it means to be a man in prison or jail?
 - a. Describe for me an inmate who would be considered weak.
 - b. Describe for me an inmate who would be considered strong.
8. How important was it for you to act or be hard when you were in prison/jail? How important is that now?
 - a. How might you show someone you're hard?
9. How important was your reputation? How important is that now?
10. While you were incarcerated did you ever have to defend yourself? Tell me about that.

Sexual Behaviors

8. How important is sex in prison/jail?
9. In prison/jail, how do men satisfy their sexual needs or desires?
10. If an inmate kissed or had sex with another inmate, how would other inmates react to that? How would men outside react to that?
11. If you found out someone you knew on the outside kissed or had sex with another inmate while incarcerated how would you react?
12. How important is sex to men who have recently got out of prison/jail?
13. After release from prison/jail, what do men do to satisfy sexual desire/needs? How might other men react to that?
14. If a man was recently released from prison or jail, who might he have sex with?
 - a. How would he let a potential sexual partner know that he wanted to have sex?
 - b. What might influence his decision of whether or not to use a condom?
 - c. Who decides whether or not a condom will be used?
15. Tell me about a situation when a recently released man would not use a condom?

16. Tell me about the first time you had sex after your release.
 - a. Why did you choose to have sex at that time?
 - b. How did you decide who you would have sex with?
 - c. How did you decide whether or not you would use a condom?
17. What are your sexual relationships like now?
18. How might the experiences you had in prison/jail affect your current sexual relationships?

Closing Questions

4. What was positive about your incarceration experience?
5. What has been positive about your life since your release?
6. What is your greatest hope for your future?

We have reached the end of the interview, is there anything else you would like to add about any of the things we have discussed today? Do you have any questions for me? If not this concludes the interview. Thank you for your time.

Curriculum Vitae

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Education

Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Social and Behavioral Sciences - to be conferred May 2017
Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, Baltimore MD

Doctor of Medicine (MD) – to be conferred May 2017
Johns Hopkins School of Medicine, Baltimore MD

Bachelor of Science in Biology, Minor in Sociology – May 2008
University of Maryland, Baltimore County, Catonsville MD

Research Experience

Summer Intern, Medical University of South Carolina, SURP

6/2005-8/2005. “Phosphorylation of p53 in Cisplatin treated HEI-OCI cells. Cisplatin is a commonly used chemotherapy drug that can have ototoxic effects on cochlear hair cells, eventually destroying those cells, resulting in permanent hearing loss. Cisplatin – induced apoptosis is presumed to be p53 dependent, thus upon phosphorylation and stabilization of p53, cell death occurs. Under the mentorship of Lisa L. Cunningham, PhD I determined the sites at which p53 was phosphorylated using immunochemistry with phosphor-p53 specific antibodies. Results indicated that Cisplatin exposure resulted in p53 phosphorylation at serine 15 in response to Cisplatin damage.

Summer Intern, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health

6/2006-9/2006. “Perceptions of Culturally Relevant Dietary Patterns in Urban African Americans with Diabetes: A focus Group Analysis.” A focus group was conducted to gain insight from individuals, with Type 2 Diabetes, about cultural and socioeconomic factors (food preference, food preparation, food availability and accessibility, an weight loss experiences) that can ultimately affect the quality of disease management. Under the mentorship of Tiffany L. Gary, PhD I coded responses into pre-designated categories using qualitative analysis software, N Vivo.

Summer Intern - National Institutes of Health, NHGRI-SBRB.

06/2007- 9/2007. Worked in the National Human Genome Research institute in the Social and Behavioral Branch under the mentorship of Vence Bonham, JD. There we explored how

physician perceptions of race and genetics effect patient treatment and diagnosis by analyzing focus group data.

Student Investigator, University of Maryland Baltimore County

11/2006 – 11/2007. Under the mentorship of Jessica Kelley-Moore, PhD I explored the mediating role of psychosocial factors in African American health outcomes. Previous research finds that among White Americans, those who are employed have better physical health and lower prevalence of depression. However that protective effect is not observed in working African Americans. To determine why this effect is not observed, I examined the mediating role of psychosocial factors, perceived societal position, and racial discrimination in counteracting the protective effects of SES.

Research Assistant, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health

6/2009-8/2009. Under the direction Katherine Smith, PhD I explored nightly news coverage of health disparities. I coded video footage from CNN, ABC, NBC, CBS, and FOX news channels.

Research Assistant, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health

10/2012-1/2013. Under the direction of Susan Grieb, PhD I explored prisoner reentry as experienced by family members. My responsibilities included: coding and analyzing qualitative data and manuscript writing.

Research Assistant, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health – The Lighthouse Studies at Peer Point

6/2013- Present. As a research assistant at the Lighthouse I have worked primarily with the Linking Active Drug Dependents in EMS to Recovery (LADDER) Study. My responsibilities have included: conducting qualitative interviews with EMS providers, modifying interview guides, creating an analysis codebook, and qualitative data analysis.

Teaching Experience

Teaching Assistant/Fall 2014

Concepts in Qualitative Research (Graduate) – Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health

- 30 students
- Discussed ideas for research papers with students, assisted students with application of course concepts to their own research projects, assisted with grading, managed course website, answered student questions about course concepts

Publications

Snipes A, Sellers S, Tafawa A. , Cooper L., Fields J., Bonham V. (2011). Is race medically relevant? A

qualitative study of physicians' attitudes about the role of race in treatment decision-making. *Biomedical Central Health Services Research*, 11, 183.

Knowlton, Amy, Weir, Brian, Hughes, Brenna, Southerland, RJ, Schultz, Cody W, Sarpatwari, Ravi, Wissow, Lawrence, Links, Jonathan, Fields, Julie, McWilliams, Junette, Gaasch, W. (2013). Patient Demographic and Health Factors Associated With Frequent Use of Emergency Medical Services in a Midsized City. *Academic Emergency Medicine*, 20(11), 1101–1111.

Knowlton, Amy, Weir, Brian, Hazzard, F, Olsen, Y, McWilliams J, Fields, J, Gaasch, W. (2013). EMS runs for suspected opioid overdose: implications for surveillance and prevention. *Prehospital Emergency Care*, 17(3), 317–29.

Grieb SM, Crawford A, Fields J, Smith H, Harris R, M. P. (2014). “The stress will kill you”: prisoner reentry as experienced by family members and the urgent need for support services. *J Health Care Poor Underserved*, 25(3), 1183–200

Academic Achievements and Awards

- Johns Hopkins School of Public Health Distinguished Research Award - 2015
- Received Unconditional Pass on HBS Departmental and Johns Hopkins School of Public Health Wide Oral Exams
- Received Honors on HBS Departmental Doctoral Qualifying Exam, 2012
- Medical Scientist Training Program Grant – NIH, 2008
- Inductee, The Phi Beta Kappa Society, May 2008
- Inductee, Golden Key International Honor Society, November 2007
- MARC U*Star scholarship recipient, Nov 2007
- Inductee, National Society of Collegiate Scholars, November 2006
- Meyerhoff Scholarship recipient, University of Maryland, Baltimore County, April 2004 to May 2008

Academic Involvement

- Training for harm reduction – add this in here
- Peer Mentoring – Johns Hopkins School of Public Health, HBS: 2012- present
- Student National Medical Association - Johns Hopkins School of Medicine chapter secretary: 2009-2010
- Meyerhoff Student Advisor: 9/2007-5/2008
- Face AIDS Campaign – Co coordinator: 3/2007 -5/2008
- Public Health Alliance – Vice President: 8/2006-5/2008
- VIP K-12 Research Fellow – High School Outreach Program: 10/2006-5/2007
- Healthy Aging in Neighborhoods of Diversity Across the Lifespan: Team leader, Data Collector: 10/2006 -5/2008

Community Service and Volunteer Activities

- Alternative Directions – Children of Incarcerated Parents (CHIP) – Mentor 1/2014 to present
- Community Adolescent Sexual Education – Instructor, Dunbar Middle School Baltimore City: 1/2009-5/2009

- Baltimore Rescue Mission Homeless Clinic – Medical Student Volunteer: March 2012
- Habitat For Humanity, Baltimore City: Oct 2012
- Student Mentoring – Mentoring students at Robert Smalls Middle School: 7/2006-5/2007
- Hospital Volunteer – Silver Spoons Feeding Program: 1/2007-2/2007
- Speaking with at-risk youth: 8/2004 – 5/2006